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EDITORIAL

THE BEST OF 1988 TO YOU

At this conjunction of the old and new years, the press is wont to wallow in the past, reviewing the most important stories of 1987. Rather than recite a litany of disasters, follies and tragedies, we prefer to look ahead—not to predict but to express freely our wishes on the glorious tabula rasa of the future. (For a true exercise in futurology, see "Cuomo's Diary," on page 3.) Herewith a happy headline history of the major events of 1988:

"U.S. Abandons S.D.I. Program; President Admits He Got Idea for Space Defense From 'Flash Gordon' Comic Book"

"Meese Resigns; Says Failure to Pass Urine Test 'Hampers' His Ability to Serve as Chief U.S. Law Officer"

"Pat Robertson Struck by Lightning During Campaign Speech, Withdraws From Race, Calling It a 'Sign'"

"Oliver North Weds Ms. Hall; Former N.S.C. Aide Admits Pair Devised Iran/*Contra* Arms Sale to Cover Up Their Romance"

"Bush Confesses He Had 'Many' Extramarital Affairs, Says They Prove He's No Wimp: 'I Chased a Little Ass, So What?'"

"Khomeini Agrees to Arm-Wrestle Saddam Hussein; Winner's Country to Be Declared Victor in Gulf War"

"Bare Thatcher Love Nest: Commons Narrowly Defeats P.M.'s Move to Abolish British Press"

"New Hite Report Shows Adultery Rate Rose Among Reporters in Wake of Gary Hart–Donna Rice Scandal: Author Says Too Many Sex Stories 'Demoralizing' Press"

"Reagan, Gorbachev Sign START Treaty, Leaders Vow a Phase-Out of All Nuclear Weapons"

The last headline represents our serious wish for our readers and for the world.

CUOMO'S DIARY

NEW LIGHT ON REMINGTON MURDER
Lee W. Jones

CATHOLIC DISSENTERS
Adelle-Marie Stan

OLLIE'S NAVY
David Corn

THE DE MAN AFFAIR
Jon Wiener

ARE 17-YEAR-OLDS DUMB?
Deborah Meier
Florence Miller
Etta Mooser

THE POLITICS OF RAGE

PALESTINIAN YOUTH COMES OF AGE

AS'AD ABUKHALIL

The popular uprising in the Israeli-occupied territories of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank heralds the emergence of a new generation of Palestinians. In the past few weeks a network of young people, most in their teens, have seized the initiative and relegated the traditional leaders of the Palestinian national movement to the sidelines.

It is too soon to say for sure how this phenomenon will transform the Palestine Liberation Organization's structure and policies. However, it is clear that new forces are emerging among the Palestinian youths in the refugee camps of Lebanon and Syria. They are the Fatah–Revolutionary Council (Fatah-R.C.), known in the West as the Abu Nidal group, and a new Palestinian Sunni fundamentalist movement encouraged but not created by Iran. The former is attracting youth because it stands for a renewed commitment to armed struggle and can claim to be free of the corruption and ties to various Arab regimes that have plagued the main groups of the P.L.O.; the latter because it offers inspiration to a generation that has seen other, secular ideologies fail. There are no conspiratorial scenarios, all too popular in the Western press, that can explain these new trends. Rather, the underlying causes for their emergence are deeply rooted in the long history of Palestinian statelessness and displacement.

The two most significant developments that have shaped Palestinian attitudes in the past decade are undoubtedly the Israeli invasion of Lebanon (including, of course, the massacres at Sabra and Shatila) and the past three years of human attrition in the camps in that country. The

(*Continued on Page 18*)

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EXCHANGE.

UNADULTERATED CORN

Washington

It is difficult to respond to David Corn's assault upon me in the pages of *The Nation* ["Mellowing of a Muckraker," Nov. 14]. His opus doesn't contain any particularly large untruth; rather it presents a series of small untruths and half-truths. There are so many distortions, innuendoes and out-of-context statements that it is almost impossible to correct the whole by trying to explain its parts. For Corn is a skillful sleight-of-hand artist who combines facts with flummery.

Let me explain what I mean. In 1976 a group of prominent Asian-Americans sought to establish a national bank in Washington, D.C. Never before had a national charter been granted to a bank that would be owned and operated primarily by Americans of Asian descent. They felt this was discrimination and sought my intervention, because of my background as a correspondent in Asia. I agreed to help them and purchased $2,000 worth of stock—the minimum required by law—on condition that the stock be assigned to a Chinese charity.

A Korean man-about-Washington, Tongsun Park, whom I had exposed as a shady wheeler-dealer, sought stock in the bank. When I learned this, I threatened to withdraw from the project if he had anything to do with it. The board voted unanimously to bar him from any involvement with the bank. Later, an investigation revealed that he had used secret straw men, without the board's knowledge or consent, to acquire a small percentage of the bank's stock. About the same time, evangelist Sun Myung Moon made some overtures to me. I rejected the overtures and, instead, wrote some critical stories about his lobbying activities on Capitol Hill.

Those are the straight facts. But here's how Corn presents them: "The reporter who won the Pulitzer Prize for revealing the Nixon White House's tilt toward Pakistan in 1972 and obtained transcripts of the Watergate grand jury proceedings was suckered into becoming an official of a bank owned by the shady lobbyist Tongsun Park, a Korean Central Intelligence operative and associate of evangelist Sun Myung Moon."

This is unadulterated McCarthyism, except that the late Joe McCarthy indicted his victims by association. Corn tries to smear me by linking me with people I never associated with, indeed with rascals I had actually exposed and opposed.

Shortly before publication of the Corn exposé, a member of *The Nation*'s staff telephoned my associate Barbara Newman. According to Newman, this person told her frankly: "Corn is trying to hurt Jack Anderson, but he doesn't have anything." The *Nation* staffer went on to describe Corn's forthcoming article as a "hatchet job."

Sure enough, the article attributes no wrongdoing to me. All the wrongdoing cited therein was allegedly committed by others whom I supposedly associated with. Thus, I am tarnished for their alleged offenses in the McCarthy manner. The only terrible misdeed that is laid directly on me is a perceived softness toward Ronald Reagan. Ironically, Corn's article appeared on the same day that I accused Reagan of secretly ordering the violation of a treaty with the Soviet Union. And a review of my columns reveals they have been overwhelmingly critical of the Reagan Administration.

Though Corn wore regulation gloves and bowed formally before the Marquis of Queensberry, he used the thumb and an occasional rabbit punch. He describes Max Hugel as a "business partner" and claims I "collaborated" with him. Corn goes on, in the McCarthy tradition, to accuse Hugel of "improper stock trading" and other offenses. The reader might easily get the impression that I "collaborated" in these "improper" activities. In fact, Hugel is a major stockholder in a company that has contracted with me to work on some television productions. I was no more his "business partner" than David Corn is the business partner of Arthur Carter, publisher of *The Nation*. And I certainly would never accuse Corn of "collaborating" with Carter in his stock market operations.

Corn also accused my partner, Dale Van Atta, of spiking a critical story about a Howard Ruff political associate because we were negotiating to sell my newsletter to a company partially owned by Ruff. In fact, the story was killed because it was libelous. This occurred months before my newsletter was offered for sale. Other news organizations also spiked the same story, and a television station that finally used it now faces a libel suit.

Again, Corn recites Ruff's alleged shortcomings and assails a Ruff associate who has nothing to do with the newsletter or the newsletter company. Presumably, this tarnish is also supposed to splash on me. This, too, is a refinement of the McCarthy technique. I am not only guilty by association; I am also guilty of an association, once removed. And let the record show that my newsletter, before it was purchased by the company that Corn faults for its conservative ownership, was owned by a company whose owners are outspoken liberals.

Perhaps Corn's cruelest cut was an attack on my children because I recruited them to do volunteer work for causes I believe in. He also assaulted the causes—the Young Astronaut Council, which is helping 450,000 children get ready for the twenty-first century, and the Grace commission, which has eliminated $69.5 billion in government waste. Corn's objection to these two worthy endeavors is that Ronald Reagan initiated them. Presumably, Corn would oppose the millennium if it should be introduced by someone whose political credentials don't have his approval. In fact, both causes have widespread support among Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives alike.

Corn implied that the late Drew Pearson would never have become involved in any causes other than muckraking. In fact, I look to Drew Pearson for my example; he promoted a number of worthy causes, including the Friendship Train, Freedom Balloons Across the Iron Curtain, Big Brothers and many others. Corn neglected to mention that I also work with *Parade* magazine, which established the Washington-Moscow hot line. Most newspapers try to be good citizens and promote worthy causes, I should add.

I could go on, but hopefully I have made my point. David Corn purposefully hyped his charges to produce fire by friction which responsible statements could not have kindled. In reckless disregard of the facts, he set out to "hurt" me by damaging my most priceless possession—my credibility. *Jack Anderson*

CORN REPLIES

Washington

Although Jack Anderson does not challenge any of the facts contained in my article, he tries his best to give them a reverse spin so that reporting them reflects poorly upon my journalistic practices rather than his. Let me try to navigate the reader through the cascade of charges and countercharges. First, a summation of the original article: Jack Anderson, one of the nation's premier muckrakers, has found common cause—either for ideological or financial reasons—with a number of characters who are more suitable as targets. Also, he has been easy on Reagan. Now to Anderson's counterpunches:

§ Anderson and the Diplomat National Bank: Anderson's current explanation for joining the executive committee of the bank is different from what he told *The Washington Post* in 1976. Back then he said he had become chair of the executive committee to restore confidence in the bank after reports that a substantial portion of its stock was controlled by associates of Sun Myung Moon. Now he says that he only wanted to help Americans of Asian descent who faced discrimination and that he threatened to withdraw if Tongsun Park was involved. Alas, Park did end up, in Anderson's version, with "a small percentage of the bank's stock." To me, that sounds like Anderson was "suckered"—particularly since, as *The Post* reported, some bank officials believed that Park and Pak Bo Hi, a Moon associate, controlled at least 46 percent of the bank when it was created. Noting Anderson's entanglement in this affair does not suggest he

(*Continued on Page 21*)

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CONTENTS.

Volume 246, Number 1

EXCHANGE

2

EDITORIALS

1 The Best of 1988 to You
3 Cuomo's Diary
4 Nobody's Talking
5 Falwell's Mother — *Lynne Sharon Schwartz*
20 W.H.O. Needs It? — *Harold Fruchtbaum*

COLUMNS

6 Minority Report — *Christopher Hitchens*
7 Fascists and Liberals (How to Tell Them Apart) — *Edward Sorel*

ARTICLES

1 The Politics of Rage: Palestinian Youth Comes of Age — *As'ad AbuKhalil*
8 The Remington Murder: After Thirty-three Years, the Real Story — *Lee W. Jones*
12 Americans and the Pope: The Voices of Catholic Dissent — *Adelle-Marie Stan*
16 An Iran/*Contra* Cover-Up: The Case of the "Stealth" Boats — *David Corn*

BOOKS & THE ARTS

22 Deconstructing de Man — *Jon Wiener*
25 Ravitch and Finn: What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know? — *Deborah Meier and Florence Miller*
27 What They Do Know — *Etta Mooser*
28 Films — *James Lardner*
30 Films — *Mark Gevisser*

Drawings by M.G. Lord

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EDITORIALS.

Cuomo's Diary

While crossing Fifth Avenue recently Andrew Kopkind spied a leather-bound diary, which apparently had fallen out of a black limo that had pulled away from the curb moments before. The handwriting has been identified as that of a high-level New York State official whose presidential ambitions are the subject of much press speculation these days. We reproduce a pertinent entry below.

Dear Diary: January 1, 1988

I hate Albany in January. It combines the depressing gloom of *Ironweed* with the encompassing doom of St. Petersburg in the last years of the czars. I wish that Nelson had let the city sink into a deserved oblivion instead of erecting all those wretched Protestant buildings. Is it possible that this may be my last year in this dreadful capital?

Not a day goes by that someone claiming to be a Democratic power broker doesn't send a message urging me to run for the presidency. Now not only do they want me to save the party from Jesse but I've got to stop Gary as well! Holy Mother, deliver me from my friends and smite my supporters! The fact is, it's too late to enter the early primaries, and who wants to campaign in freezing Iowa and New Hampshire and those Klan-ridden Southern counties anyway? I'm glad I've taken steps to keep my name off their primary ballots. I could come in after Super Tuesday, but as

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W.B. says, that would look like Jackson-bashing and could sour the blacks on me for years to come. The best chance I'd have in the primaries is the last—California and New Jersey, on June 7. The Field poll out West has me leading all the other Democrats 3 to 1, *at worst*! I'm practically the Governor of northern New Jersey already. If I slipped into those states at the last minute, I could win big, establish my bicoastal legitimacy as a successful primary campaigner and pick up the nomination, *no problema.*

But I've said time and time again I won't campaign this spring, and I hate to go back on my word. E.K. flip-flops all the time—a lot of harm it does him in New York City, that gonif, as Stanley used to call him, poor sonofabitch—but my son Andrew says I can't blow my rep as a man of honor and integrity, which of course is quite right. I've got to be careful that I'm not seen as a creature of the back-room bosses, whoever they are—Bob Strauss, Tip and the Boston crowd, Paul Kirk's guys, labor heavies, Impac '88. The rest of the country thinks I'm a mob thug anyhow, and although we got a good break from Nick Pileggi's piece in *New York* clearing me of mafioso stuff, I've got to *look* as clean as I am. So scratch June 7.

That leaves me the period between the first week in June and the third week in July for all the dealing. As it looks now—and who can be sure?—Gary and Jesse are likely to come in with a plurality of the delegates between them, and many of the others may still be fighting for a chance. Dukakis has enough money to keep him going until the end of the century, and Simon will be kept afloat by the liberals who were hoping for me all year. Gore would be silly to drop out; he's the only white hope for the Southerners and the old Scoop Jackson crowd, and he's an attractive v.p. on any ticket. Gephardt could wither away if he loses Iowa and does poorly in New Hampshire and the South. Babbitt is hot this week with the Washington insiders and the Republican pundits, which as far as I can tell is the kiss of death. But what do I know?

The fact is, the longer I stay out, the more pitfalls I will avoid. Anything can happen this year, and probably will. The press hasn't begun to uncover all the scandals that are there for the digging. Someone might be hit by a train. Jimmy Carter could enter the race, Biden might come back—with John Sasso as his campaign manager. Stranger things have happened.

Where was I? It's June. Albany is sweltering. The economy is teetering and I've just come out with my long and thoughtful intro to the Cuomo commission report on the economy. I'm now an expert on American *perestroika*—competitiveness, debt reduction, fiscal policy; all those things F.R. has been saying so well in *The New York Review of Books.* I will have made another brilliant appearance before a large group of establishment Republicans—this time the business community, as it was with the Council on Foreign Relations after I got back from Russia. I think I've covered my ass on the "soft on Gorby" charge Bill Safire likes to bring up; remind me, diary, to keep to the right on this one from now on. Then there's a National Governors Conference—there's *always* one when I need one, and I make a stirring speech that signifies my availability.

Meanwhile, my guys are talking to their guys. This is the first convention to which the two front-runners have come to bargain as well as to be nominated. Jesse was smart to make Willie Brown his national campaign chairman. Willie and I go back. We could do business in Atlanta. I think I've mended my fences with Gary, too. He didn't like it when I called him a second-rater in '84, but I was nice to him when he quit last May and when he came back last month. Gary's easy. Real easy. I could promise him the ambassadorship to the U.N. All those delegates have women on the side and they couldn't care less.

Jesse's another question. I couldn't put him on the ticket, and I don't know if he'd settle for head of HUD. That *is* a bit of a ghetto, I guess. But I will have to deal with him. He'll have a big bloc of votes at the convention, and even if I get a lot of the uncommitted superdelegates, I'll need his constituencies to run the campaign. But whom else will the power brokers pick? The blacks will veto Nunn on general principles, the liberals will veto Bradley for his *contra* votes, Teddy is still out because of Chappaquiddick. Lee Iacocca? Give me a break. There's only room for one Italian Catholic. It's in the bag.

Nobody's Talking

On December 3, the State Department ordered a Washington landlord to turn off the electricity and water at the Palestine Information Office, a private organization staffed by U.S. citizens which disseminated materials on the Palestinian cause [see Christopher Hitchens, "Minority Report," *The Nation*, October 10, 1987]. That same day, Senate and House conferees voted—redundantly—to shut the P.I.O. and, for good measure, to boot the Palestine Liberation Organization out of its U.N. mission in New York.

Brushed aside were the First Amendment, which in 1986 the State Department had said protected the P.I.O.'s operation, and the United States' U.N. treaty commitment, which guarantees all officially designated groups access to the international body's proceedings. But P.L.O.-bashing makes better presidential politics than respect for the law. Last April, the same month he chucked his helmet into the ring, Representative Jack Kemp introduced a bill to shut down the P.I.O. and the P.L.O. mission. Not to be outdone, Bob Dole proposed similar legislation in the Senate. Proving that winking at the Constitution is not the sole province of Republican candidates, Senator Paul Simon, not coincidentally a recipient of generous contributions from the Israel lobby, signed on to Dole's bill.

Initially, the State Department opposed the closing of both offices, saying that the action against the P.I.O. violated constitutional guarantees of free speech and that the expulsion of the P.L.O. mission trespassed on the President's foreign policy turf, reneged on a treaty obligation and handed the P.L.O. a propaganda coup. The State Department eventually backed down on the P.I.O. matter, hoping that in exchange for this bone Congress would leave the mission to the U.N. open. But the ploy did not work. Now the

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White House is trying to find a way around the provision in the law that shuttered the P.L.O. mission.

Congress's contempt for the rights of Palestinians in the United States comes at a time when Israel has brutally violated the human rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories. In a presidential race dominated by media attention to "character," a candidate's views on the Palestinian question—at home and abroad—should be one of the real tests of whether he or she has the right stuff. True political courage means defending the constitutional rights of an unpopular group in this country, and it means supporting self-determination for the Palestinians, a keystone of any Middle East peace accord.

But don't expect too much. Other than Dole, Kemp and Simon, the candidates of both major parties have kept silent on the P.I.O. and P.L.O. clampdown, with the exception of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who opposed shutting both offices. The pols have also—with the same exception—been mute on the causes of the recent riots in Israel's occupied territories. For example, Governor Michael Dukakis, in his prepared remarks on foreign policy at a December 22 appearance before the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City, failed to mention the unrest in Gaza and the West Bank. As far as he was concerned, the only problems were that Israel's neighbors do not recognize its right to exist, Jordan and Syria won't come to the bargaining table and the Soviet Union is making diplomatic hay in the region.

Dukakis's omission was certainly not unique. He and the other silent Democrats should stop evading the Palestinian question. Pretending it doesn't exist is the other side of the coin from P.L.O.-bashing. Both approaches may be smart politics, but they represent bankrupt policies.

(Note: Next week, *Nation* editor Micah Sifry reports from Israel on the Palestinian situation.)

Falwell's Mother

It is gratifying to see levity in high places. According to the December 3 *New York Times*, the Supreme Court Justices enjoyed a few laughs while investigating the case of the Rev. Jerry Falwell versus *Hustler*. Surely after this season's wrenching news of child abuse, parricide, racial brutality and surrogate motherhood, we, too, the dutiful consumers of current events, are entitled to reap what amusement we can from the spectacle of Falwell challenging a girlie magazine's depiction of his late mother.

For any recent arrivals from outer space, *Hustler*'s parody of the Campari "first time" ads showed Falwell in "a drunken, incestuous encounter with his mother in an outhouse." Free speech issues make strange bedfellows. Possibly many of the parties publicly supporting *Hustler*, as well as others, like myself, rooting from the sidelines, are as repelled by their ally as Falwell was by the parody. It would be nice to say, A plague on both your outhouses, but we can't afford the indulgence. *Viva Hustler!* it must be, then.

If we can stop giggling for a moment, though, we might consider the role of the only crucial character in this horse opera who cannot speak for herself or through a lawyer: Falwell's mother. Women—as symbols, possessions, passive things—still serve as a highly effective and most acceptable means through which men can attack and belittle one another. Given this state of affairs, as well as the nature of *Hustler*, it follows as the night the day that the magazine should mock Falwell by showing his mother as lewd. And just as naturally, Falwell—who claims to have been "amused" by every other satire aimed at him—would be stung to the quick by this one. No doubt with a straight face, he avers that his mother was "a godly woman whose memory has never been blemished by anyone." (Richard Nixon's mother was also a saint, we were informed upon his leaving office; let these two cases be fair warning to prospective mothers with an excessively spiritual bent.)

Would Falwell sue, one wonders, had some imaginary magazine depicted him as a plump cherub perched on the knee of a mother draped in blue robes, surrounded by a halo, gazing down gravely with affection and awe, flanked by saints?

The wonder of it all, and the blacker humor, is that we still take for granted the ancient polar representation of women. Decades—no, centuries—of women patiently attempting to be simply human have apparently done little to eradicate the madonna-or-whore notion. Presumably Falwell's mother was a flesh-and-blood woman with no more desire to copulate with her son in an outhouse than the rest of us mothers with ours. But that defense is not sufficient for the Reverend. He owns his mother, lock, stock and memory, and he is suing to protect the value of his property. He is responding, he declares, as would "any red-blooded male in any nation on earth."

Madonnas and whores are easier to think about, and to deal with by ritualized behaviors, than are ordinary women: One need simply look up with reverence or down with con-

(*Continued on Page 20*)

REMINGTON REVISITED

In 1957, *The Nation* published a special issue on the William Remington case ["The Remington Tragedy—A Study of Injustice," December 28]. In a classic investigative report, Fred Cook provided the first comprehensive analysis of Remington's Kafkaesque trial and imprisonment. Remington was tried twice in the U.S. District Court in New York City. Indicted for perjury, he was really tried as a traitor.

In an editorial introduction to Cook's investigation, *The Nation* noted that Remington was "cruelly, unjustly and foully done to death—for his indiscretions, his youthful political enthusiasms, his idealism." The Bureau of Prisons report on the case, completed in December 1954 but released to Lee Jones only last year, thirty-three years after the fact, confirms our original judgment [see "After Thirty-three Years, the Real Story," page 8]. Rarely has the ugliness of the anti-Communist impulse been rendered more vividly than in this new evidence on the Remington murder.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Malaysia is a country that most Westerners know about, if they know about it at all, through the lush novels of Anthony Burgess and Paul Theroux. In the sort of "roundup" coverage offered by the newspapers, it features either as an example of "confessional diversity sharing in fruits of harmony" or as "another Asian economic miracle" where free enterprise has triumphed over ideology. This one-dimensional accounting has drained the interest from a society that actually played quite a significant part in evolving our view of events. It was in the Malay Peninsula that the British Army defeated a tenacious postwar Communist insurgency, isolating the mainly ethnic Chinese guerrillas by means of strategic hamlets and other innovations. A double irony resulted from this: Graham Greene recorded that the British took note of the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu and then conceded independence to the Malays they had "pacified." The United States, in bold contrast, hired the Malaya counter-insurgency experts from the retreating British and put them to work trying to contain the Vietcong. One of them, Sir Robert Thompson, became a star on the hawk circuit.

After the country's emergence as an independent federation named Malaysia, and the defection of Singapore to the social democratic Prussianism of Lee Kuan Yew, its military alignment was crucial in the machinations that resulted in the Indonesian coup of 1965. It was that dramatic blow that permitted the final withdrawal of Western "advisers" and left the Malaysians to their own devices for the first time. Since then outside attention has oscillated, as I said, between coverage of Malay-Chinese rivalry among the local elites and hymns to the modernizing influence of prosperity. When the Malaysian government last month moved to suspend almost all political and civil liberties, editorialists in the United States were appalled. They wondered how to explain this apparently irrational behavior by a regime so dependent on good will from outside and the "open door" of investment. They were particularly worried by the unconcealed anti-Chinese animosity displayed by the government of Mahathir bin Mohamad.

On a visit to Malaysia last year I met a number of Mahathir's critics. I also purchased and read a copy of his amazing book *The Malay Dilemma*. As a consequence, I am less surprised by his decision to go for a crackdown against the press, opposition forces and the mere suggestion of Chinese nationalism among the minority.

Most politicians who are preoccupied with race and eugenics tend to think of their own people as superior. It is those of the rival "stock" who are usually found to lack the traits necessary for self-government, commerce and education. With Mahathir it is the other way around. He sees his own community, the ethnic Malays, as genetically inferior to the more recently arrived Chinese population. It is the Malays' relative lack of accomplishment, in his view, that mandates discrimination against the more sophisticated settlers and immigrants. As he puts it in his introduction:

> In this book I have explained how the laws of genetics, which govern the transmission of hereditary characteristics, are affected adversely by in-breeding and other marriage practices. . . . while it must be admitted that in-breeding is not general among the Malays, what cannot be denied is that the instances of in-breeding are greater among them than among the other major race in Malaysia—the Chinese.

Mahathir goes on to say that Malays ignore such evolutionary principles because they are, like him, predominantly Moslem. He argues that Chinese marriage custom specifically prohibits in-breeding, and concludes rather mournfully that "in-breeding together with forced marriages of the unfit produce a much greater percentage of human failures among Malays as compared with other races." When I read that last year, in the club in Penang where Somerset Maugham used to gaze coldly out at the ceaseless entrepreneurship of the Chinese, I knew there was going to be trouble.

Mahathir admits that it was the Malays rather than the Chinese who cooperated with the British occupiers and the Japanese invaders. He concedes that despite this the Chinese have achieved hegemony in the country's business sphere. He also speaks darkly of the tendency of Chinese to form politically radical parties. This is the same fork—the accusation of being the chief capitalists *and* the chief communists—on which the Jews of Europe, and the Chinese of Indonesia, were once impaled. It is an accusation to which there is no convincing reply, especially when it is backed up by the assertion that those identified are in some unfair way racially superior. Noncommunal, nonracial politics in Malaysia have been negated by the Mahathir government, and there is no cause for editorial surprise, because the measures against integration have been taken by a government that explicitly doesn't believe in it.

* * *

Chapter 23 of the Congressional report on the Iran/*contra* scandal deals with the involvement of the Drug Enforcement Administration in the shadow world of Oliver North's arms-for-hostages racket. Footnote 84, which appears on page 371, reads as follows:

> The DEA agents had other experiences with people involved with North's network. Sometime in 1986, Fawn Hall asked agents 1 and 2 to meet with Michael Ledeen. They met at Ledeen's office. Ledeen told them he was a very good friend of North's. Ledeen said he had a $30,000 contract with Continental Airlines and he wanted to know how he could stop DEA from seizing their airplanes if cocaine was discovered on board.

I am curious. Is this the same Michael Ledeen who was an adviser to the National Security Council? A consultant on "terrorism" for *Nightline*? A specialist on counterrevolution for *The New Republic*, *Commentary* and *Partisan Review*? A co-author of Claire Sterling's Popish plot? I can't be sure, because the last time I called that Michael Ledeen to check a point he said, "Fuck you, Mr. Hitchens! Never call this number again!" Can any reader help me out?

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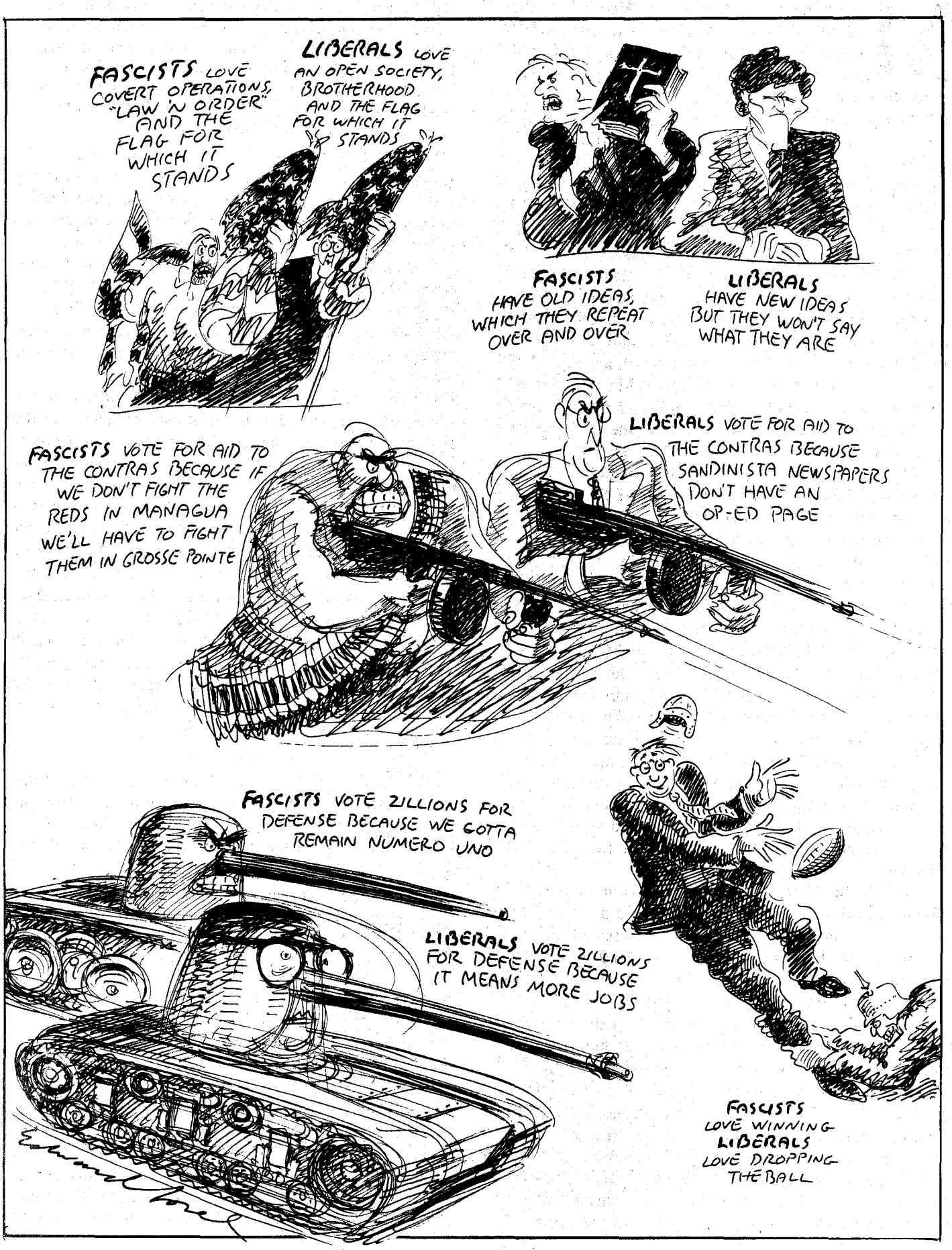
Fascists & Liberals (How to Tell Them Apart)

EDWARD SOREL


FASCISTS LOVE COVERT OPERATIONS, "LAW 'N ORDER" AND THE FLAG FOR WHICH IT STANDS
LIBERALS LOVE AN OPEN SOCIETY, BROTHERHOOD AND THE FLAG FOR WHICH IT STANDS
FASCISTS HAVE OLD IDEAS, WHICH THEY REPEAT OVER AND OVER
LIBERALS HAVE NEW IDEAS BUT THEY WON'T SAY WHAT THEY ARE
FASCISTS VOTE FOR AID TO THE CONTRAS BECAUSE IF WE DON'T FIGHT THE REDS IN MANAGUA WE'LL HAVE TO FIGHT THEM IN GROSSE POINTE
LIBERALS VOTE FOR AID TO THE CONTRAS BECAUSE SANDINISTA NEWSPAPERS DON'T HAVE AN OP-ED PAGE
FASCISTS VOTE ZILLIONS FOR DEFENSE BECAUSE WE GOTTA REMAIN NUMERO UNO
LIBERALS VOTE ZILLIONS FOR DEFENSE BECAUSE IT MEANS MORE JOBS
FASCISTS LOVE WINNING
LIBERALS LOVE DROPPING THE BALL

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ARTICLES.

THE REMINGTON MURDER

After 33 Years, The Real Story

LEE W. JONES

On January 27, 1953, William Remington was convicted at his second trial on two of five perjury counts: lying about passing secret information to admitted Soviet spy courier Elizabeth Bentley, and lying about his knowledge of the existence of the Young Communist League at Dartmouth College, his alma mater. On November 24, 1953, the U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the verdict by a 2-to-1 ruling, and Remington began a three-year prison sentence at Lewisburg Penitentiary (the same prison to which Alger Hiss had been sent). On November 22, 1954, almost a year later, Remington was fatally beaten by a fellow prisoner.

After a partial blackout of information about the circumstances of the attack, which *New York Post* columnist Max Lerner described as a "wall of silence," reports from both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and prison authorities began to be released in piecemeal fashion. Those described the motive of the attack as robbery and repeatedly denied that anti-Communism was a factor in the assault. Until now, this official version has been the accepted one, but the recent release to this writer of the Bureau of Prisons report on the murder, completed in December 1954 but never made public, reveals a very different and disturbing story. It shows not only that anti-Communism was the sole motive of the attack but also that government officials lied about the motive in an effort to cover it up. Equally significant are the report's revelations about the scandalous prison conditions and the gross negligence of prison officials, which allowed the anti-Communist furor of the time to result in Remington's murder.

In the summer of 1948, when Elizabeth Bentley publicly accused Remington of providing her with secret information, he was a rising young government economist who had just been appointed director of the export programs staff of the Office of International Trade, an agency of the Commerce Department. Despite two failures to procure grand jury indictments against him in 1947 and 1948, and his Loyalty Review Board clearance in February 1949, the government finally obtained a perjury indictment against him when Ann Moos Remington, his recently divorced wife, testified for the first time and supported some of Bentley's charges. The circumstances of her grand jury testimony, however, were highly questionable. The former Mrs. Remington "broke" and contradicted her former husband's story only after enduring hours of ex parte interrogation that included threats as well as deception about her right to remain silent concerning her ex-husband. The grilling of Ann Remington, which dissenting Court of Appeals Judge Learned Hand would later characterize as "unlawful entrapment," was done primarily by grand jury foreman John Brunini, who had once been Bentley's literary agent, and by a special assistant to the Attorney General, Thomas Donegan, who had once been her personal attorney.

Remington was sentenced to Lewisburg Penitentiary despite his request not to be incarcerated in the same institution as Alger Hiss. According to the acting warden at Lewisburg, Remington said that he did not "want to associate with persons who have been Communists or involved in any way with Communism." While Lewisburg was not a maximum-custody prison for confirmed criminals, as were Alcatraz, Leavenworth and Atlanta, it was far from the "model prison" or "country club" type of institution portrayed in the press by the supposedly astute columnist Drew Pearson. It was a prison that officials knew had serious problems.

The problems and dangers of Lewisburg were so formidable that unless extreme care was taken with a "notorious" figure like Remington, there was great potential for trouble. The most serious danger at the prison stemmed from its changing population—the arrival of a number of new inmates whom Bureau of Prisons director James Bennett characterized as "very difficult." He estimated that approximately 500 inmates out of a prison population of 1,200 could be termed "difficult behavior cases" who were "susceptible to emotional changes and outbursts," and who had committed such offenses as murder, rape and serious assault.

Another problem that added to the potential for trouble was overcrowding. The prison was filled so much beyond its capacity that 130 inmates had to sleep outside the prison walls in a farm dormitory. Aggravating the overcrowding problem was the fact that the custodial staff numbered only 187 and was, in the words of prison officials in the report, "spread too thinly to provide necessary supervision."

Lewisburg was not only understaffed and overcrowded with a heavy concentration of dangerous types; it had the additional problem of housing facilities that were unsuited to its new population. Prison officials said that there was "a disproportionately small number of cells and rooms for individual occupancy" and "too large a proportion . . . (approximately 60 percent) of the open dormitory or squad room type." This, the prison officials said, made difficult if not impossible the task of providing for "prisoners who need close supervision or protection because of their views." This reference, of course, was to prisoners like Remington who were associated with Communism.

Such conditions represented a virtual tinderbox for someone like Remington: The prison, according to those who ran it, was much affected by the anti-Communist stridency of

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the period. In a letter to the Attorney General, B.O.P. director Bennett described the institutional atmosphere at the time of the assault as "tense," because "the inmates were aware of the Communist issue and it was a frequent subject of discussion following radio and newspaper accounts of occurrences and controversies over such matters."

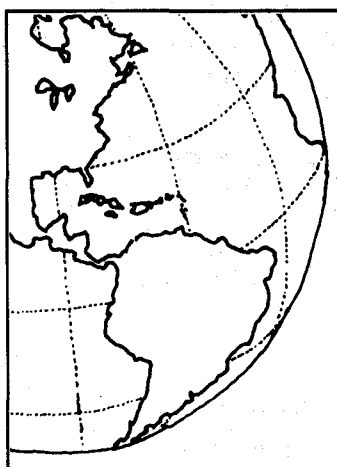
Adding to the tension over the Communist issue, according to Bennett, was "the resentment of the impending discharge of Alger Hiss," which was being "widely publicized and discussed pro and con in the papers and on radio." (Hiss was released in November 1954.)

In such an atmosphere, a notorious "Communist" like Remington should have been carefully watched and segregated from the more volatile inmates, or his life might be at risk. The failure to take these crucial preventive measures led to Remington's murder.

At the time of the attack, Remington was housed in an "honors" quarter, an open dormitory arrangement that was supposed to be reserved for inmates who had "demonstrated qualities of responsibility, stability and good adjustment to the institution and other inmates." Yet in a flagrant error in judgment motivated by expediency, prison authorities decided that those qualifications could be waived for inmates, no matter how dangerous, who were assigned nighttime duties. The decision to allow such a safety waiver was rationalized by the fact that the inmates working those hours needed to sleep during the daytime, and Remington's housing unit was quieter than most. It was decided, therefore, that on the same floor, just opposite Remington's unit, I-32, which housed four "stable, well-adjusted inmates of above average . . . intelligence," were to be placed five inmates who were obviously dangerous, in unit I-39. They all had records of juvenile delinquency and prior institutional commitment, and had had "adjustment and disciplinary problems" at Lewisburg. Not only were such dangerous men placed in close proximity to Remington but they were also, for such an open dormitory situation, quite loosely guarded and given significant freedom of movement.

Prison officials saw no need for increased security, despite Remington's mention, in letters censored by prison officials, of repeated thefts, mattress burnings and physical threats inflicted by the I-39 residents on the I-32 group. As a result of such incidents, all the I-32 inmates had put in requests to move, and Remington complained in his letters that "bad cliques take over effective sway even in 'honors' quarters" and had even voiced the desire for more adequate protection: "Ordinarily, any man detests the idea of being under surveillance. Here in many quarters, the relatively decent element often wishes to goodness there were more."

The three I-39 inmates who later confessed to being involved in the attack on Remington should never have been given honors-quarters liberties. Prison profiles of two of the assailants, George McCoy and Louis Cagle Jr., referred to them as "psychopathic." McCoy, who incited the attack, was a "real McCoy," belonging to the notorious feuding family of West Virginia. He was described by prison authorities as "an unstable, assaultive, aggressive, and mentally deficient prisoner" with an I.Q. of 61 who had been arrested in-



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numerable times, served three previous sentences for car theft, robbery and carrying concealed weapons, and had once escaped from an Ohio prison camp.

Cagle, who was not yet 18 at the time of the attack, was described by prison officials as a "dangerous young man" who was "unpredictable and possessed of frequent and dramatic mood swings from exhilaration to depression." He had a delinquency record going back to age 14. Just two months before the assault he had been placed in segregation for fighting.

Robert Carl Parker, the third man involved in the assault, had been in penal institutions since the age of 9 and was another prison escapee, having fled the Virginia state prison in 1951. He had been deemed dangerous enough to be sent to the Atlanta Penitentiary for a time.

The prison authorities had thus provided the final ingredient for a murderous attack on Remington—close proximity to a dangerous and loosely supervised group of men, who were, moreover, passionate anti-Communists. The following is the official account of what happened on the morning of November 22:

> McCoy and Cagle, after observing the officer complete an inspection tour of the floor, slipped into Remington's room where he was alseep [*sic*] after having worked the hospital night shift. They were accompanied by Parker, who went into the toilet area adjoining the room. Parker heard a thud, looked into the room and saw Cagle striking the sleeping Remington with a brick-in-sock weapon. McCoy then grabbed the weapon and, with one terrific blow, struck Remington again on the head.

The Bureau of Prisons investigation of the attack quickly revealed both the identity of the attackers and their motive. Indeed, the probable motive became evident even before it was clear who had committed the assault. On the very day of the murder it was reported: "They (the prison investigators) do not know who was responsible for the assault, although they know that there is a small group of inmates who have strong feelings against him on the grounds that he is or was a Communist."

The fact that the primary motivation of Remington's murderers might be anti-Communism represented political dynamite for the Justice Department. Already accused of harassing and persecuting Communists, the department might, in this instance, be held at least indirectly responsible for Remington's murder. It had placed him in a dangerous prison, admittedly tense with an anti-Communism that they had helped incite by public statements and actions, and had failed to protect him adequately. The columnist Max Lerner wondered in print if Remington's murderers had an anti-Communist motivation and suggested that the disclosure of such a motivation "might prove embarrassing to a Justice Dept. that had so implacably pursued Remington, but it would help the rest of the country see what political hatreds lead to."

Faced with the prospect of a political scandal, the government chose to institute a motive cover-up.

A comparison of what the government learned (and when) with what it was publicly revealing offers a clear view of the cover-up in action. On November 24, B.O.P. director Bennett essentially confirmed that anti-Communism was the primary motivating factor in the attack. He wrote in a letter to old-time Remington adversary William Rogers: "Apparently the [assailants McCoy and Cagle] . . . bore no ill will against Remington other than that he was a Commie." Bennett also pointed out that McCoy had been heard to boast, "I'm going to get me a Commie." The December 1954 Bureau of Prisons report, which was the definitive account of the killing, asserted: "The death of William Remington was the direct result of a brutal attack by three prisoners led by an aggressive, antisocial prisoner who was motivated by an obsessive passion to kill Communists."

What was publicly revealed, however, was another matter. Two days after Bennett's telling letter to Rogers, Norman McCabe, an F.B.I. agent investigating the case, released to the press highly misleading information, holding that the assailants had planned "to ransack Remington's room." The press, perhaps overeager for answers, accepted the theory that robbery was the motive. The Associated Press reported that the F.B.I.'s disclosure "ended speculation that the slaying might have been an act reflecting anti-Communist" feeling in the prison. The United Press wrote, "The robbery motive announcement halted rumors that Remington's death may have had a connection with communism."

In a series of false statements to local reporters, acting warden Fred Wilkinson reinforced the cover-up. On November 26, 1954, for example, he said: "It has been reported in the newspapers that Remington's death was a result of anti-Communist feeling, but we don't feel that we are experiencing that out here." The acting warden labeled as "hogwash" press reports that "groups of prisoners were going around 'looking for Communists.'"

The deception continued in a November 29, 1954, newspaper story, based on a press release maintaining that "prison officials and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, along with U.S. Attorney J. Julius Levy . . . have been unable to determine the direct motive that led to the attack on Remington." This press release came a day after acting warden Wilkinson had confidentially arrived at the conclusion that anti-Communism was clearly the primary motive. The cover-up was never publicly exposed. The murderers were never tried because the government accepted their pleas of second-degree murder.

Despite all its failures, the B.O.P. found itself and the Lewisburg staff blameless. The 1954 report states: "We can find no basis for believing there was negligence, bad judgment or failure to abide by institutional rules or policies." Most remarkable of all, though it seems certainly consistent with the government's entire handling of the case, the bureau placed the greatest blame for the tragedy on Remington himself, saying, "Certainly if he had been more cooperative or less naive about those with whom he was associated and asked for protection or given voice to his misgivings he would still be alive."

One final time, guilt by association had arisen to haunt Remington. □

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AMERICANS AND THE POPE

The Voices of Catholic Dissent

ADELLE-MARIE STAN

There once was a time when it would have been unthinkable for a Roman Catholic to picket the Pope, a time when public disagreement with the Supreme Pontiff of the church constituted a reprehensible heresy in the eyes of most Catholics. Today the heretics are everywhere, in the highest reaches of Catholic and secular academia, in the leadership of religious orders and even among the churchgoing laity in parishes throughout the country.

The Catholic Church's most vocal internal critics, those who openly challenge the exclusion of women from the hierarchy and the church's ban on the practice of birth control and abortion, compose what the media call the dissent movement. Their Christian values, say its members, compel them to challenge the injustices committed by the church. Some are hailing it as the second Reformation. Others yearn for the good old days, when it was so clear what it meant to be Catholic. But welcome or not, the dissent movement has entered its second decade.

At the time of Pope John Paul II's first papal visit to the United States, in 1979, the U.S. Catholic dissent movement was little more than a small pocket of disgruntled, vocal Catholics—the few feminist nuns and laywomen who convened for the first Women's Ordination Conference in 1974 and a smattering of priests and former priests who had been radicalized in the 1960s.

But when, in the course of that first visit, a nun chosen to address the Pope issued a plea for equality in the church, the dissent movement became more than a mere annoyance. In 1979, Sister Theresa Kane was president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and president of the Sisters of Mercy, one of the largest orders of nuns in the United States. Kane challenged John Paul to give women access to "all ministries in the church," called upon Mary, the Blessed Mother, to be His Holiness's "source of inspiration, courage and hope," and then spontaneously knelt before the Pope to receive his blessing. Her performance was carried live by television stations throughout the nation, and Sister Theresa became the dissent movement's first heroine.

Kane received no punishment from the Vatican for her actions, but that was eight years ago. Things are different now. In 1984 twenty-four nuns who signed a newspaper advertisement that called for a dialogue in the church on the subject of abortion were threatened with expulsion from their orders—meaning the loss of vocation, job, home and chosen family if they did not recant. (All but two of the sisters have had their cases closed by the Holy See.)

In 1986, Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle was stripped of most of his powers as administrator of his archdiocese because of his ministry to gays and lesbians, and because of charges that he had allowed non-Catholics to receive communion. (Hunthausen is also an outspoken anti-nuclear activist and a tax resister. After publicly humiliating the Archbishop by its censure, the Vatican restored his full powers last summer.) Later in 1986, Father Charles Curran, a theologian at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., was forbidden to teach Catholic theology there because of his liberal views on issues of human sexuality, especially his contention that abortion is sometimes a moral choice. (Curran's appeal is under review within the university, and he has initiated an academic freedom suit against the institution.)

The most vocal Catholic dissidents—the ones who grab the headlines—are a rather small group. But the opinions they express often reflect those of the majority of U.S. Catholics: A 1985 *New York Times*/CBS poll showed that 79 percent of U.S. Catholics believe that one can disagree with the Pope and still be a "good Catholic."

"It does not take a majority of people to bring about change," Frances Kissling, president of Catholics for a Free Choice, explains in Annie Lally Millhaven's recent book, *The Inside Stories: 13 Valiant Women Challenging the Church*. "It takes a minority of people acting with the acquiescence or even quiet support of the majority." The real dissent movement is not confined to that minority; it is much larger than the one presented by the media. As I see it, the movement in the United States comes in three parts:

First, there is the noisy revolution, made up of people like Kissling, who found their political legs in the civil rights struggle, the antiwar protests and the secular women's movement. Many of the nuns involved in this part of the movement learned about politics in the post-Vatican II "renewal" of their religious orders as well, a time when many orders radically changed their internal structure from hierarchical to democratic. But whether nuns or not, the majority here are outspoken feminists who have taken on the church for its traditional oppression of women, particularly its rejection of reproductive freedom and its refusal to ordain women despite the fact that many other Christian churches do. But they are not looking merely to win a place in the hierarchy; they seek a "transformed church," where, as has happened in the convents, the hierarchical model is replaced by a more participatory one. These are the people who have taken their fight to the news cameras, with their vigils and protest actions, their newspaper ads and television appearances.

The women-church movement, a loose network of Catholic feminists, forms the key component of this noisy revolution. "Women-church," a name coined by theologian Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, refers to women who create and participate in their own bread-breaking and wine-sharing liturgies, who advance the feminist cause in their

Adelle-Marie Stan is a freelance writer and editor formerly on the staff of Ms. *She is working on a book about the Catholic dissent movement.*

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theological and historical research and who advocate ecumenical rituals with women of other faiths.

"I don't even go to regular church anymore," one nun said. "I just go to women-church."

"You see, we say the church has left us," Mary Hunt, theologian and coordinator of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER), told me two years ago. "The whole point of the women-church movement is to say that women as women cannot be full religious agents in the patriarchal church and, therefore, the only way we can be church is to be women-church."

Catholic gay groups have joined the noisy revolution in recent years. While gay and lesbian issues have long been part of the women-church agenda, groups like Dignity and New Ways Ministries once focused their efforts mostly on ministering to lesbian and gay flocks. But since many bishops, in the wake of Vatican action against liberal colleagues like Hunthausen, have barred groups like Dignity from using church facilities for their meetings and worship services, the protests of homosexual Catholics have become increasingly dramatic. (Several weeks ago, Dignity members who refused to sit during a mass in New York City's St. Patrick's Cathedral were arrested.)

Dissent, however, belongs not only to the noisy ones. The rapidly growing second element of the movement is posing its own threat to the near omnipotence of the hierarchy. These are the practicing Catholics who still belong to neighborhood parishes but who also put their disagreement with the Pope into practice in their churches by allowing women to grace the altar and altering the Vatican's prescribed liturgy. And in their homes as well they defy the Pontiff: The shrinking size of the American Catholic family is testament to the flock's disregard for Humanae Vitae, the papal instruction forbidding the use of "artificial" birth control issued by Pope Paul VI in 1968, a teaching frequently repeated by John Paul II.

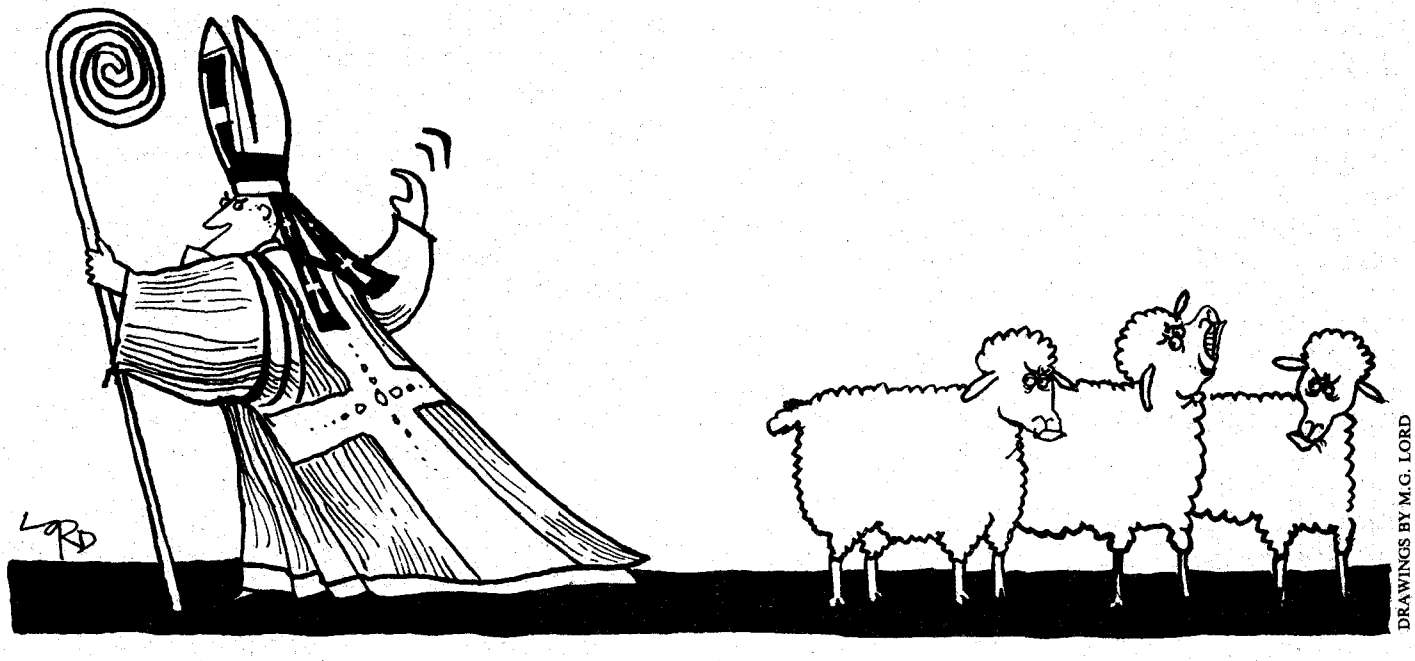
Then there's the problem of the empty confessional. U.S. Catholics have long been ignoring the sacrament of penance as an antiquated rite and an invasion of privacy. This sits none too well with the Holy Father, who in the text of his address to U.S. bishops in Los Angeles this past fall warned Catholics who had not been to confession recently to think twice before lining up for communion, the central rite of the mass, on Sunday. Confession-skipping illustrates the problem of what Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk of Cincinnati calls "grocery-store Catholics," those who think they have the right to pick and choose what doctrines they will and will not accept.

Indeed, there is a kind of quiet anarchism in the U.S. church. Entire parishes are defying papal edicts by allowing girls to serve at the altar in the same way boys have for centuries, and some have even allowed women to preach an occasional homily, the sermon that follows the rite of communion. Most priests, overworked due to a lack of priestly brethren, prefer to grant a general absolution to their congregations during the mass rather than to hear the individual confessions of each churchgoer. At the 1983 synod of bishops in Rome, John Paul presented an instruction that called for the use of general absolution only in emergencies, but the instruction has been largely disregarded in the United States.

In some archdioceses, women have been elected to offices traditionally held by men. In the Archdiocese of Detroit, Anne Flaherty, a divorced woman who earned a master's degree in divinity from a Catholic seminary, was elected to the vicariate, an office that serves as a liaison between priests and their archbishop. Two years later, Flaherty's election is still not recognized by Archbishop Edmund Szoka, who has forbidden Flaherty to attend the vicars' monthly meetings.

The third segment of the dissent movement is one that is often not even figured into the equation—the millions of "lapsed" Catholics who have simply stopped going to church but refuse to renounce their membership.

Combined, the three segments of the dissent movement encompass a multitude of U.S. Catholics, and their numerousness raises the question, To whom does the Church belong? To the hierarchy or to the people of God?



DRAWINGS BY M.G. LORD

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So the Pope came to America to set the record straight, to give the last infallible word on the church's most disputed doctrines and to dazzle non-Catholics in his self-appointed role as the global conscience. It was a tightly run, elaborately choreographed show that ran for nine days last September.

The Pope's press men went to great lengths to craft a papal schedule that would include "meetings" with members of groups that have long felt snubbed, or at best neglected, by the church. Along with leaders of other religions, the list included talks with black Catholics (who make up less than 3 percent of the U.S. Catholic population), Native American Catholics, Catholic deacons (lay ministers who do nearly everything a priest does, without the pay and prestige) and their wives and Hispanic community leaders throughout the South and Southwest. Nowhere on the Pontiff's schedule, though, was there a meeting specifically geared to Catholic women, even nuns.

Perhaps it was because the Vatican had not forgotten the sting of Sister Theresa Kane's dramatic on-camera appeal to the Pope in 1979 that these meetings took the form of what the press office of the Holy See calls "structured dialogues"—Vaticanspeak for the exchange of speeches that have been approved ahead of time by the Pope's men.

Media access to these nonpublic events was as restricted as the guest lists. The media were divided into press pools, meaning that the fifty or so journalists admitted to a given event were supposed to share some of their information, video clips, audio tape or photographs with those of us who sat in a press center in some hotel watching the event on television. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops chose who went and who stayed behind. I had received my press credentials as a reporter for *Ms.* I did not get admitted to any pool event that I had requested and began to feel that the letters "MS" that appeared on my press tags were scarlet.

During the Pope's tour, I caught up with Archbishop Bernard Cardinal Law of Boston, the prelate often described as "the Pope's man" by the press, the day after the Pontiff had told the bishops that God does not want women priests. Cardinal Law was in the front row of the first-class section of Shepherd II, one of two L-1011s that served as papal press planes. I introduced myself as a reporter for *Ms.* and asked him for comment on the Pope's remarks. He was most obliging and gracious, and as I eased into the seat next to his, he leaned toward me as if he was taking me into his confidence.

"There are two principles that need to be borne in mind," Cardinal Law told me, looking me square in the eye. "First, the fundamental equality of all persons. Secondly, the specific equality of . . . feminine humanity. He didn't say [this] but I think this is what the Holy Father meant: that the price of that equality must not come at the expense of what it means to be feminine."

"And what would you say that was?" I asked. "How would you define that?"

"I don't know," he replied. "That's something that needs to be understood and experienced more deeply."

Having got the standard separate-but-equal Vatican response, I thanked him for his time. But as I stood up, he asked me what I had felt while following the Pope. I was rather surprised by the question.

Well, I admitted, I was often quite moved by the pageantry and, yes, my heartbeat did quicken at the sight of the Pope. "But often I was angry," I said, "especially about the ordination issue."

"Oh, I know, I understand," he said, showing all outward signs of compassion. "It must be very hard for you." That is why it is so important for us to define the feminine, he contended. The seatbelt sign was on by now, so I shook his hand. "God bless you," he said to me.

"God bless *you*, Your Eminence," I replied, eager to return to the tourist-class world of the press corps, where I was more equal than separate.

Some of the journalists with whom I traveled seemed disappointed by the lack of heated protest throughout the journey, at least until we got to the West Coast. Many apparently missed the significance of a peculiar kind of broad protest that John Paul confronted in every city he went to—apathy. Everywhere the Pope went, hundreds of thousands of people—those who were supposed to be joyously lining the route of the papal motorcade—were absent. In Miami, 300,000 were expected but only 25,000 showed up. In Columbia, South Carolina, one-fifth the number expected turned out. In Los Angeles, only 200,000 of the 2 million expected made it to the parade. Crowd projections in San Antonio were at least 200,000 over the mark.

Local television stations were quick to take the blame. Newscasters either apologized for scaring people away with their advance reports of anticipated traffic tie-ups or boasted that their coverage of the papal visit was so good that viewers opted to stay home in front of the tube, where they could see more of the Pontiff than they could in person. (I found the latter excuse rather doubtful. You can probably get a better view of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade from your Trinitron than you would standing on Broadway, but the crowds still turn out for Bullwinkle.)

The lack of papal groupies must have astounded the men from the Vatican and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops who had prepared the Pontiff's itinerary so carefully. Most of the cities visited by the Pope were targeted for

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their large Hispanic populations. Since Hispanics will make up more than half the U.S. Catholic population by the turn of the century, they are the great brown hope of the Vatican, which is counting on them to set the church back on course by bringing their fervent piety and ethic of machismo into the mainstream of American Catholicism—assuming that they've left their progressive liberation theology at the border as they enter the land of opportunity.

Admittedly, activist protest was subdued in most cities on the papal itinerary, but it was there. In Columbia, feminists tacked a series of Women's Theses (modeled on Martin Luther's 95 Theses) to the doors of Catholic churches throughout the archdiocese. In New Orleans, 200 protesters staged an alternative service to the papal mass. In Los Angeles, about the same number gathered at City Hall on the night of the Pope's arrival for a rally and vigil. And in San Francisco, the Pope was met with widespread demonstrations against his condemnation of practicing homosexuals and the church's weak and belated response to the AIDS crisis.

Several weeks after the Pope's departure, eight U.S. bishops joined some 200 of their colleagues from around the world in Rome for a synod devoted to the role of the laity in the church. Two of the American representatives, Archbishops Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee and John May of St. Louis, came armed with a number of proposals for expanding the role of women in the church, including a suggestion for accepting women as permanent deacons. Although midway through the synod May declared that there was "strong consensus" among the bishops that the non-ordained ministries should be opened to women, the proposal only made it into the first draft of the document that resulted from the synod. All that remained of the Americans' proposals in the final version was a blanket condemnation of discrimination against women and a suggestion for less gender-specific liturgical language.

As May and Weakland returned home to the United States virtually empty-handed, other bishops were at work on a pastoral letter on the role of women in the church, a document due for release sometime this year. The committee drafting the letter includes no women, a sore point with feminists but typical of the prelates.

At about the same time the bishops were meeting in Rome, a crowd of 3,000 gathered in Cincinnati for the largest Women-Church Convergence gathering ever. C.F.F.C. director Frances Kissling explained to me the "two complementary strategies" employed by women-church in its struggle for a transformed church.

"One is the strategy of confrontation and challenge—you know, directing one's attention to the hierarchy," Kissling said. "But the other, in [holding] a meeting like this, is ignoring the hierarchy. The name of the conference, Women-Church: Claiming Our Power, is just women taking their power and going with it—not worrying what the bishops have to say, not worrying about what the Pope thinks—in essence, taking their own vision of church and making it a reality." □

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AN IRAN/*CONTRA* COVER-UP

The Case of the 'Stealth' Boats

DAVID CORN

Among the many mysteries left behind by the Iran/*contra* Congressional committees is what happened to a Federal investigation of Ollie's Navy. Specifically, did the Customs Service, at the behest of higher-ups, kill a probe that threatened to disclose a National Security Council–backed deal to send high-tech speedboats to the *contras*?

The only public reference to this episode is in three lines of a Justice Department draft memorandum released by the committees. It refers to an allegation that a high-level Customs Service official blocked an unspecified investigation involving the *contras*. That inquiry, *The Nation* has learned, was initiated by the San Diego Customs office and targeted a boat dealer who, with Lieut. Col. Oliver North's blessing, sold high-speed "stealth boats" to retired Maj. Gen. John Singlaub. The boats were destined for the *contras*. The probe was aborted in the summer of 1986, a time when the Administration was desperately trying to persuade Congress to approve $100 million in aid for the Nicaraguan rebels.

The little-noticed draft memo was written shortly after Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d's November 1986 press conference revealing the diversion of Iran arms sales profits to the *contras*. In it Ralph Martin, an attorney in the Justice Department's criminal division, provided a list of charges he believed "must be thoroughly investigated in order to intelligently determine whether any criminal acts were committed by low or high level [U.S.] officials." Included in this long roster was the following item: "An AUSA [Assistant U.S. Attorney] in San Diego has reportedly alleged that a high level Customs Service interfered with of [*sic*] a Neutrality Act investigation involving the contras." The memo said no more about the case. Here are some of the details that were left out.

In 1986, according to past and present Federal officials familiar with the inquiry, Customs in San Diego, working with the local U.S. Attorney, began investigating Karl Phaler, proprietor of Freedom Marine. The previous year, as Phaler confirmed in a recent interview, he had sold three stealth boats, priced at nearly $35,000 each, to Singlaub for the *contras*. The twenty-seven-foot patrol boats are made of Kevlar (a material as strong as fiberglass but weighing less) and can evade radar detection and reach speeds of up to 70 miles per hour, Phaler said.

According to Phaler, the *contra* boat deal came about this way: Phaler met Singlaub at a 1984 conference sponsored by *Soldier of Fortune* magazine, at which Phaler was giving demonstration rides in his boats. Later that year, at a World Anti-Communist League conference in San Diego, Singlaub, chair of the organization, introduced Phaler to Adolfo Calero, a *contra* leader. Calero took a spin in a stealth boat; he was impressed. In late 1984, Phaler conferred with North in the old Executive Office Building about the ships. "Ollie North said I was a great American," Phaler told the *San Diego Union* last May. In August 1985, Phaler met with Calero, Singlaub and North's courier, Robert Owen, in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, to discuss the speedboats. Soon after that, the boats were sent to the *contras*. Singlaub's U.S. Council on World Freedom, an affiliate of the Anti-Communist League, footed the bill. Following that, Phaler said, there were "episodic discussions" about additional *contra* boat deals, but nothing came of them.

The Customs inquiry focused on allegations that "weapon systems and gunboats were going to the *contras* with the tacit permission of Oliver North and the National Security Council," a former Justice Department official said. The possible illegal conduct being investigated was the export of implements of war without a license, according to the source.

While conducting their probe, Federal investigators tape-recorded some of Phaler's conversations. On occasion he bragged of having the authorization of the National Security Council, "which at the time was a weird thing to make up," said a former Justice Department official. He talked about meeting with Oliver North and "mentioned 'intelligence circles' and 'my connects back in Washington,' giving the impression he had government support," a Customs official remarked. "This was a lot bigger than the field-level investigators thought."

Then "something happened to the investigation," a source close to it said. When Customs in San Diego sent reports to Washington, headquarters would not give the investigation a green light, a Customs official said. "You can surmise what happened when someone [in Washington] found out what was being investigated," he remarked. The same reluctance was displayed by the Justice Department, according to a former Justice official. When the San Diego U.S. Attorney's office reported the case to Washington, "it was ignored," this source said. "There was no support given to it to go forward. It ultimately died. You got the sense something was happening higher up in Justice and putting pressure on people."

"The case needed to develop," the Justice source explained. "Obviously, this was during the time Congress was voting to decide whether to send arms to the *contras*. . . . We needed time to see if the allegations were true. To the extent they could be checked out, they did."

Phaler maintained that the stealth boats were to be used only to transport supplies for the *contras*, "not to go fighting." Thus, it would have been "silly" for Customs to have been interested in him, he added. But a Customs official noted that Phaler "converts these Kevlar boats to outfit mini-cannons." A spokeswoman for Singlaub told *The Philadelphia Inquirer* earlier this year that the boats were used for medical evacuations. But the newspaper, quoting unnamed "U.S. experts in small boat military tactics," reported that the ships have engaged in attacks on Nicaragua.

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High-speed boats have been used to assault ports on both coasts of Nicaragua, according to the Nicaraguan Embassy in Washington. "The attacks have been by rapid-speed boats with very strong outboard motors, fairly long and fitted with machine guns," said Martin Vega, an embassy counsel. He added that Nicaragua has not been able to determine if these ships are Phaler's stealth boats.

A Customs spokesman said the service would not comment on the Phaler investigation, unless this article relied on named sources. (The anonymous sources quoted in this story, fearing they would be hurt professionally if identified, spoke only on the condition that they not be named.) The U.S. Attorney in San Diego, Peter Nunez, did not return telephone calls. A spokesman for the Justice Department said, "We have never heard of" the Phaler case. He refused a request for an interview with Ralph Martin.

Was Phaler protected? He said he was not aware he was ever a target of investigation. If so, there was no cause for him to try to pull strings; and sources close to the investigation believe he never caught on. But Phaler, a man with a checkered past, does have friends and contacts in the right places, such as the office of the Commissioner of Customs.

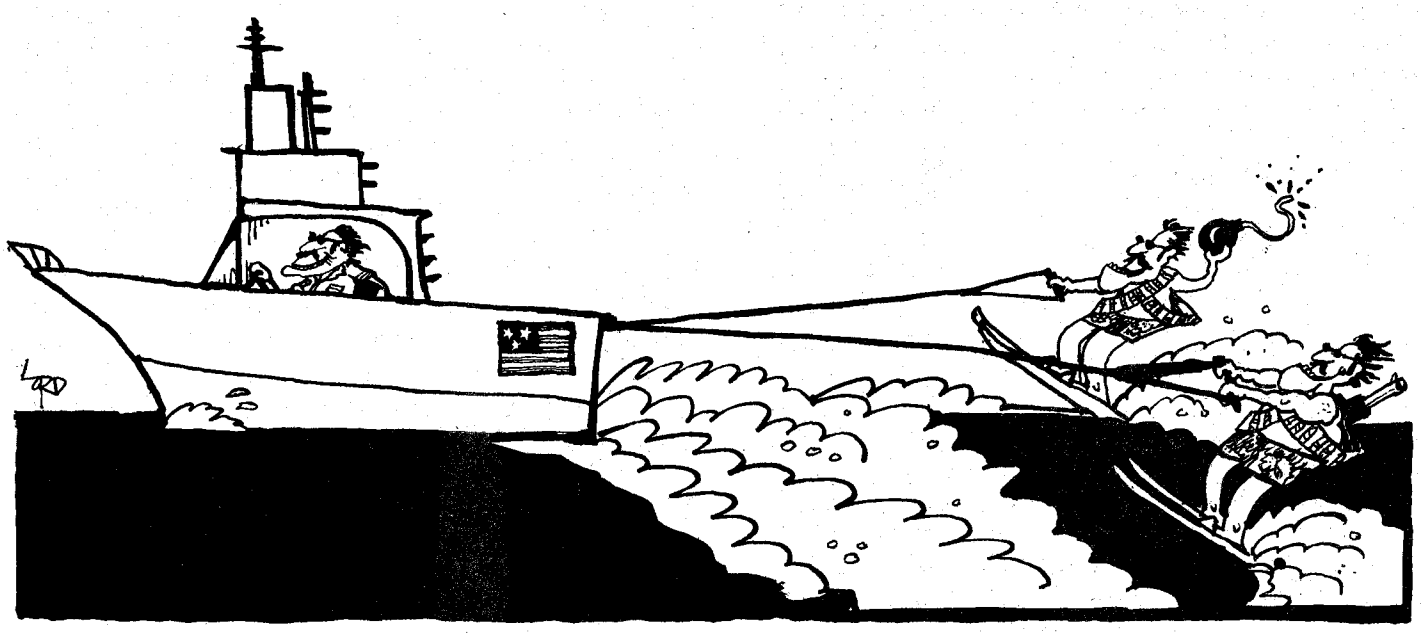
A Vietnam veteran, Phaler served ten years in the Navy, including a stint as an intelligence officer. In 1973 he joined the California Attorney General's office. Seven years later—after a Federal informant claimed he had sold drugs to Phaler—he resigned his position as the state's Deputy Attorney General in charge of a special unit that specialized in organized-crime cases. (Governor George Deukmejian, a conservative Republican, was then Attorney General.)

In 1980, Phaler recalled, he went to advise the government of El Salvador on its small-boat warfare program. He had "no connection to the U.S. government," he asserted. "This was a private venture." But Phaler made sure "not to step on toes" and kept U.S. officials informed. This provided, he said, "his initial line to the N.S.C.," and he "worked with" Constantine Menges, an N.S.C. staff member. He added that his travels as a freelance journalist—Phaler has written for *Soldier of Fortune*—have sometimes been followed by debriefing sessions with N.S.C. officials.

In 1981, Phaler learned of the Kevlar stealth boats and decided they would be ideal for the U.S. Navy, Customs and the Coast Guard. Freedom Marine began hawking the boats. (In February 1987, Phaler and Robert Brown, the publisher of *Soldier of Fortune*, told *The Philadelphia Inquirer* that Brown had invested $500,000 in Freedom Marine.) Phaler said that in late 1985 he spent six weeks in Key Largo, Florida, demonstrating his ships to a Customs drug patrol. In 1986 he brought his case to the top and took William von Raab, Commissioner of the Customs Service, for a ride. "We cruised up and down the Potomac with machine guns all over the boat," Phaler remembered. He added, "Von Raab was wild over it." A Customs spokesman confirmed that von Raab took the Kevlar boat cruise. The ride, according to another Customs source, came during the service's inquiry into Phaler. "The question was, What's von Raab doing going out on a ride with this guy?" a former Justice official said.

The pitch to von Raab was set up by Noel Koch, who was then Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Affairs. "Koch was my spark plug when he was at the Pentagon," Phaler remarked. Koch, the Pentagon's top counterinsurgency expert, also worked with North on the interagency group on terrorism and on the Iran arms initiative. After taking an earlier demonstration ride on a Phaler boat, Koch became an advocate, encouraging U.S. officials to consider buying the craft, he said. For instance, Koch noted, he attempted to "push along" discussions Phaler was conducting with the Navy's special SEAL (sea, air, land) commandos.

Despite Koch's intervention and von Raab's enthusiasm, Phaler could not win over Customs procurement officials. To date, he has had no luck in convincing any U.S. maritime agency to switch to his new breed of boat. Failing to sway the U.S. government, he has turned to distant shores. In the past years, Phaler has tried to peddle the boats to Israel, Peru, Chile and Ecuador. "I visited Baghdad recently and had some interesting conversations," he added.



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The Phaler case is only one of several instances that provoke suspicion about the integrity of *contra*-related investigations run by Federal agencies. The Iran/*contra* committees, in their final report, listed seven episodes in which North or then-national security adviser John Poindexter interfered with probes that got too close to their secret *contra* support operations. Three involved the Customs Service in 1986. In one, North persuaded von Raab to delay an investigation into allegations that the Maule Aircraft corporation had shipped four aircraft to the *contras* in possible violation of U.S. export law. In another, North and Poindexter succeeded in blocking a Customs inquiry into Southern Air Transport, which was connected to both the covert *contra* resupply operation and the Iran initiative. During the hearings, retired Col. Robert Dutton, who supervised the resupply activity, testified that North said he spoke to Attorney General Meese about this probe and then told Dutton "it would be taken care of." The Customs agents, Dutton said, "didn't show up again." In the third case, a top Customs official handed over to Robert Owen the only copy of tape-recordings made by a Customs informant who had gone to Costa Rica to investigate a counterfeiting and drug ring that allegedly included Drug Enforcement Agency officials.

Though investigators for the Iran/*contra* committees were aware of the Phaler deal, they did not explore the matter fully. "We did not have the resources or the time," said one staff member. Owen was asked by committee investigators about the stealth boats prior to his public testimony. When he appeared, however, Owen was not queried about the ships. The craft—and the quashed investigation—were never mentioned during the hearings.

And so the question remains, Who in Customs decided to kill what field officials thought was a promising investigation? And what prompted that decision? These are questions that the House subcommittee on crime, which is now investigating various aspects of the Iran/*contra* affair, should try to answer.

The suspended Phaler investigation offers further evidence that the White House's covert crusade against Nicaragua undermined law enforcement in the supposed law-and-order Administration of Ronald Reagan. "A lot of cases," a former Justice Department official said with some bitterness, "brought issues like this. . . . You're dealing with a Republican-run Department of Justice and Customs. It's very difficult. You're talking about their friends and their secret plans. . . . This was very enlightening, in a disturbing way." □

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Palestinian Youth

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

Israeli invasion led many Palestinians to question the wisdom and rightness of the military and political policies pursued by the P.L.O. leadership over the years. Many demanded a new definition of "struggle" (a key word in the Palestinian political lexicon) in order to condemn the widespread corruption and lethargy in P.L.O. ranks before 1982. The dissident movement within Yasir Arafat's Fatah organization, which was launched in the spring of 1983 and led by the veteran P.L.O. commanders Abu Musa and Abu Khalid al-Amlah, initially attracted many of those disillusioned young Palestinians who were looking for new answers to an old problem. Abu Musa and Abu Khalid promised an escalation in the military confrontation with Israel, in sharp contrast to Arafat's acceptance of several cease-fires in the period prior to the invasion, and rejected diplomatic maneuvering as futile.

Nevertheless, the Abu Musa group quickly lost its popularity. It was discredited in the eyes of many Palestinians as early as the summer of 1983, when Syrian troops used its fighters to defeat Arafat's forces in the northern port city of Tripoli, utilizing indiscriminate shelling of refugee camps. The dissident movement also lost support when it incorporated many former P.L.O. leaders and members who were notorious for their corruption and thuggery in pre-1982 Lebanon. Furthermore, the fierce battles that erupted in 1985 between Shiite Lebanese militias backed by Syria and Palestinians in the refugee camps of Beirut eroded the last vestiges of respect for Abu Musa and his comrades. What became known as the war of the camps illustrated that the dissident movement was no more than a pawn of the Syrian regime, to be used even in inter-Palestinian fighting, thus undermining the dissidents' claim to political independence.

Abu Nidal was the first to take advantage of the changing situation. By gradually distancing himself from the Syrian regime and by heavily engaging his forces in the defense of the camps, his organization was able to attract many disenchanted fighters from other P.L.O. organizations. Fatah-R.C. came to symbolize "action against all enemies" and "insulation from the corruption of Beirut." En masse desertion from Abu Musa's movement to Fatah-R.C. is geometrically increasing the size of the organization to an extent that worries the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (the Marxist-Leninist Palestinian organization led by George Habash) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (another Marxist-Leninist Palestinian organization, led by Nayef Hawatmah). Both are older splinter groups that have historically appealed to frustrated and disillusioned Fatah members but are now seen as too dependent on the Syrian regime and too close to what Fatah represents in its military practice and political objectives. In the Rashidiyyah camp, near Tyre, for example, the fighting

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force of the Fatah-R.C. is second only to the power of Arafat's Fatah. In Syria, the government became increasingly uncomfortable with the erosion of popular support for Abu Musa's people in Syrian refugee camps in favor of Abu Nidal, and finally closed Abu Nidal's offices and expelled his men from the country in the summer of 1987. (It should be noted that there is no evidence, as yet, of Abu Nidal's links to Palestinians in the occupied territories.)

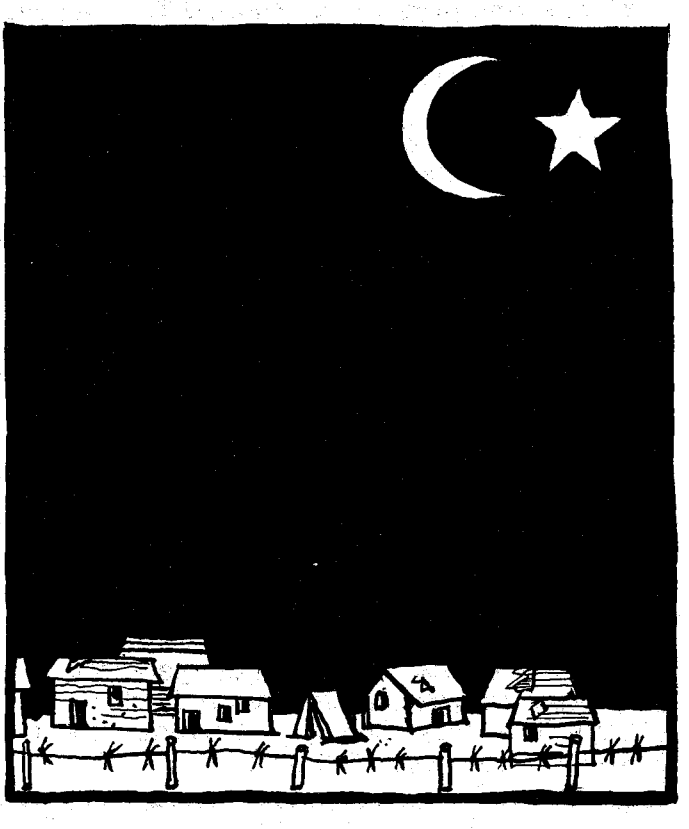
The new situation has forced the leaders of Fatah-R.C. to restructure their organization. To be sure, the old secretive organization, which has been responsible for several notorious acts of violence that have claimed the lives of innocent civilians, such as the attacks at the Rome and Vienna airports in 1985, has been maintained. However, a new structure was created to help Fatah-R.C. broaden its appeal in public recruitment. These two organizationally independent structures now constitute the Abu Nidal group. The internal operational bodies, which are superficially similar to the organization of Freemasonry, still insist on a degree of secrecy. No Palestinian—or other Arab—is allowed to become a member unless that person passes through a trial period lasting nearly a year, which is called having candidacy status. After the candidate becomes a member, he (or sometimes she) pledges an oath never to leave the organization. This strict condition may account for the high number of executions that take place within its ranks. Every issue of the Fatah-R.C.'s weekly publication, *Filastin ath-Thawrah*, contains reports of executions of members who are typically called "traitors." The issue of March 31, 1987, for example, announces the execution of "two murderous agents . . . of the dirty king," in reference to Jordan's King Hussein. Such practices incite terror within the rank and file of the organization and insure strict obedience and discipline.

The growth of the Abu Nidal group has led it for the first time in its history to operate in public, to organize and sponsor rallies in Lebanon and Syria and to attempt to establish a mass-based organization to compete with other P.L.O. factions. This new method of operation was in evidence by early last November, when Walid Khalid, a Lebanon-based leader of the group, claimed that the Fatah-R.C. had hijacked a boat with Israeli passengers aboard. Much to the surprise and embarrassment of the Abu Nidal group, the passengers turned out not to be Israelis (they are believed to be Europeans). As of this writing, eight hostages are still being held. Other Palestinian groups have criticized the operation for its sloppiness. Nonetheless, it is significant that the whole event, which was shrouded in much confusion, was not conducted in secrecy. Khalid chose to face the press unhooded, in a local hotel.

The success of the Fatah-R.C. in its expansion and recruitment campaigns was recognized in Arafat's agreement to meet with Abu Nidal's representatives in April 1987 in order to bring him under the wings of the P.L.O., in sharp contradiction to past P.L.O. pledges to "liquidate the presence of Abu Nidal and his men." Arafat even offered to grant Fatah-R.C. official recognition and membership within the various P.L.O. bodies. Negotiations between the two organizations eventually concluded with an agreement that ended the state of war between them—an important step, given that Abu Nidal's men had killed several P.L.O. representatives in Europe for having met with Israelis. Abu Nidal also pledged to suspend temporarily all "international military operations." However, the prospects for a continuing improvement of ties between the two groups will depend to a large degree on Arafat's relationship with Syria and the changing political map of the Lebanese camps.

The other new movement is a pro-Iranian Palestinian fundamentalist organization (a Palestinian Party of God of sorts) that is developing within the womb of Arafat's Fatah. Leaders of the new movement are recruiting and organizing in order to capture the leadership of the largest Palestinian organization. They appeal to a generation that sees religion as a radical form of political expression and mobilization and that perceives Marxism and Baathism (the official ideology of the ruling regimes of Syria and Iraq) as bankrupt.

Fundamentalism is not a uniquely Palestinian phenomenon, of course; religious and sectarian thought now tend to characterize the predominant movements throughout the region. But the Palestinian fundamentalist movement does not have a leader who can command the support of all Palestinians. However, Sheik Abdallah al-Hallaq has emerged as its leader in Lebanon. Hallaq is based in Sidon, where Palestinian organizations feel immune from the harassment of either Syria or its Lebanese client Amal. The Sunni majority in the region and Syria's reluctance to deploy its troops in the city for fear of provoking Israel have made it a secure place for a Palestinian military presence, as well as for Moslem opponents of the Syrian regime.



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The ascendance of Islamic fundamentalism in the Lebanese camps has been accompanied by a similar emergence in the Israeli occupied territories. The movement is centered in Gaza, where the Islamic College provides intellectual and political guidance. Fundamentalist students have run the student council there since 1978. On the West Bank, a fundamentalist slate won in student elections at Hebron University this year, and the movement also is very influential at An-Najah University, in Nablus. At Bir Zeit University, the leftist and centrist (Fatah-oriented) groups had to join forces to prevent the fundamentalists from becoming the dominant political grouping in the student council. The movement often uses the name of Islamic Jihad (though it should not be confused with the Lebanese Islamic Jihad or the Egyptian group of the same name) for its military operations, such as the attack on Israeli soldiers at the Western Wall in October 1986. It is increasing its popularity by resorting frequently to daring operations against the occupation army. Its domain of decision-making is purely local and indigenous, unlike other P.L.O. organizations in the territories. The fundamentalists call for the liberation of all Palestinian territories and reject Israel's existence on religious grounds.

The rise of the new movements in Palestinian politics is a direct result of frustration and anger among Palestinian youths, who are impatient with years of international inaction and indifference on the Palestinian question. They also resent the failure of P.L.O. organizations to achieve the aspirations contained in their charters. The continued occupation and suffering breeds an atmosphere of despair. The recent riots in the occupied territories attest to a growing spontaneity of political activism among Palestinian youth. The ability of diaspora Palestinian organizations (i.e., the P.L.O. leadership) to dictate decisions and policies to their people under occupation has diminished markedly. The occupation and three-year-old war of the camps in Lebanon has shattered many of the axioms of Palestinian politics. That new ones have emerged should not be surprising. □

EDITORIALS.

(*Continued From Page 5*)

tempt but never straight on, at eye level, with fellow-feeling and respect.

LYNNE SHARON SCHWARTZ

Lynne Sharon Schwartz's most recent book is The Melting Pot and Other Subversive Stories *(Harper & Row).*

W.H.O. Needs It?

The World Health Organization is in a financial crisis, largely because of Washington's decision to withhold part of the United States' membership assessments for 1986 and 1987. This large cut in the financial resources of W.H.O. poses a serious threat to world health. Diminished U.S. financial support for the United Nations is a result of the anti-U.N. sentiment successfully promoted by Reagan conservatives. Unlike U.N. bodies such as Unesco that have been sharply criticized for poor management and programs inimical to the interests of the United States, W.H.O. had been considered effective and until recently noncontroversial. Certain W.H.O. efforts, however, raised the ire of ideologues on the right.

The United States has yet to pay the nearly $62.8 million owed W.H.O. for 1987, which was due at the beginning of the year; it is also in arrears by $15.4 million for 1986. The levy on member states is fixed according to a formula based on each country's ability to pay. By withholding payments, Washington has reduced by 22 to 25 percent the portion of W.H.O.'s budget contributed by its members. Brazil, Iran, Iraq, Poland and several other countries are also behind in payments. The Soviet Union has met its 1986 obligation of $25.4 million and its 1987 assessment of $24.6 million.

While withholding part of its W.H.O. payment, the United States has made voluntary contributions—$17.1 million in 1987—to such W.H.O. programs as health education, research and training in tropical medicine, and the control of particular diseases. Knowledgeable observers suggest that the Reagan Administration's strategy toward W.H.O. and the other international agencies is to maximize American influence in them by withholding money for general operations but giving funds for those programs the Administration likes. For W.H.O. this has meant a retrenchment that threatens even those activities the United States supports.

W.H.O. carries the heavy responsibility of helping governments deal with the AIDS pandemic. It has launched a global immunization campaign to protect all the world's children against diphtheria, measles, poliomyelitis, tetanus, tuberculosis and whooping cough by 1990. The prevention and treatment of diarrheal diseases and malnutrition—ravagers of children in the poorer countries—and the encouragement of breast-feeding for newborns are other areas of W.H.O. activity. The recent rise in maternal deaths in childbirth has also brought an investment of W.H.O. funds and effort. Committed to disease prevention, W.H.O., in cooperation with governments and international agencies, is helping countries provide safe drinking water and basic sanitation for their people. The organization's mandate extends to the industrial world with programs on health and safety in the home and workplace, alcoholism, drug abuse, mental illness and diseases of the elderly.

Ultimately, the withholding of membership payments by the United States is economically, medically and politically unwise. Health is a fundamental component of economic and social development, and actions that undermine the work of W.H.O. threaten efforts to prevent malnutrition and disease and to slow the growth of the world's population.

HAROLD FRUCHTBAUM

Harold Fruchtbaum teaches the history and philosophy of social medicine at Columbia University's School of Public Health and writes about international health affairs.

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EXCHANGE.

(*Continued From Page 2*)

had cut a deal with shady figures tied to Korean intelligence. Rather, it suggests the perils a newsman faces when he engages in such transactions. Anderson resigned his bank post in response to an editorial in *The Miami Herald*, which criticized his role.

§ The unnamed *Nation* source: Apparently, Barbara Newman, who has worked with Anderson on his television projects, misrepresented to him a conversation she had with a *Nation* intern. While checking facts in the article, the intern called Newman to ask her about Anderson's deals with Max Hugel. I believe our intern when she says she did not make the remarks Anderson cites. Newman is very excitable—as I witnessed when I interviewed her. But Anderson is accustomed to taking her word. For instance, in October he ran a series of her reports from the Bekaa Valley, in Lebanon, where supposedly she had gone to track down the assassin of her lover, Lebanese warlord Bashir Gemayel. (Two of Anderson's columns, as well as an article in *The Washingtonian*, noted Newman's relationship with Gemayel.) The columns tried to show Gemayel's positive side and counter Bob Woodward's recent portrayal of him as a "savage murderer" in his book *Veil*. The day the series began, two former members of Anderson's staff called me to express their shock that Anderson would rely on the reports of someone with such an obvious ax to grind.

§ Anderson and the ex-spook: Anderson is stretching when he maintains that the article leaves the impression that he collaborated with Hugel in improper stock trading. If it did, that was not the intent. As I noted, Anderson "has collaborated on producing television documentaries with" Hugel. I did raise the question of whether Anderson should be producing films with Hugel, a former C.I.A. official and Reagan campaign aide. Anderson suggests Hugel is no more his business partner than Arthur Carter, the publisher of *The Nation*, is mine. But Anderson is working with Hugel on a $4.2 million film deal for Home Box Office. The two sought each other out and are partners in the endeavor. Anytime Carter wants to invite me into a similar deal, I am ready. Anderson, one would guess, has the luxury of picking his own partners. He should be more discriminating. Also, note how Anderson does not address one of the more serious charges: that he used the Drew Pearson Foundation as a pass-through for $100,000 for a documentary on Rajiv Gandhi he made with Hugel. The money came from a business that wanted to curry favor quietly with India.

§ Anderson and Ruff: As to the issue of whether or not Van Atta spiked a story that dealt with a Ruff associate, I refer Anderson to what Van Atta told me: "Of course it [Ruff's pending offer to publish Anderson's newsletter] had something to do with it." This remark undermines Anderson's claim that the decision to kill the article occurred months before his newsletter was offered for sale. The story in question involved Neal Blair, a conservative activist and Ruff's political strategist, and Blair's management of the legal defense fund for *contra* supplier retired Maj. Gen. John Singlaub. It was not a story about a failed lawsuit against Ruff, which indeed Van Atta had spiked on its merits several months prior to any negotiations with Ruff.

§ Anderson, space and Grace: Again, Anderson just doesn't get the point. I was not critical of the Young Astronaut Council for helping kids to learn math and science or of Citizens Against Government Waste for identifying ways the government can save money. I raised the issue of an independent journalist working closely with projects initiated by the White House. That seems a fair topic of debate—especially when the journalist plugs the project in his column and does not make note of his own involvement. Anderson has done that at least twice with the Young Astronaut Council. It also seems fair to observe how a journalist covers an organization (e.g., Young Astronaut) that has his children on its payroll.

§ Anderson and Reagan: Credit where credit is due. As soon as my piece came out, Anderson ran an important series revealing that Reagan directly ordered a Star Wars test that violates the antiballistic missile treaty. To Anderson watchers, it was both surprising and refreshing to see him hold Reagan accountable for Administration policy. Anderson writes: "A review of my columns reveals they have been overwhelmingly critical of the Reagan Administration." No argument there. After reviewing more than 500 of his columns written in the past two years, I concluded that while Anderson has assailed White House figures and policies, he has let Reagan off scot-free. Several former Anderson reporters confirmed my impression and noted their dismay with Anderson's soft treatment of Reagan. In a recent article in *The Washington Post*, Anderson took a different tack. He told *The Post* that the columns I used to demonstrate his hands-off approach to Reagan had actually been written by Van Atta. But Anderson's name appeared on them, he ran them, and he has final say on what goes into the column. Passing the buck to his protégé was not to Anderson's credit.

§ Anderson and McCarthyism: In his letter, Anderson accuses me of McCarthyism four times. Anderson should be the expert. He went from helping McCarthy (by passing him information about the alleged Communist ties of a presidential aide) to co-writing the first major McCarthy exposé, a book that hit the Senator hard. Yet Anderson cheapens the term "McCarthyism" with his overuse. It is not "unadulterated McCarthyism" to point out the company a crusading journalist keeps—particularly if it runs counter to his public persona or provokes questions about how he covers a certain subject. Actual or potential conflicts of interest are fair game. One does not assign the sins of Anderson's associates to Anderson by questioning his involvement with such figures. It is not McCarthyism to note Hugel resigned from the C.I.A. after certain public allegations: It is a fact. Nowhere in the article did I link Anderson directly with an individual with whom he has not chosen to link himself. He says I accuse him of being "guilty by association, once removed," a reference, I suppose, to Blair. The point is that an Anderson employee apparently killed a story about Blair, in part because of Blair's connection to Ruff. If indeed that occurred, it's not guilt by association, it's bad journalism. Anderson has no real response when confronted with the facts, so he resorts to McCarthy-baiting and, thus, does a disservice to his own legacy.

Finally, Anderson maintains the article attributed no wrongdoing to him, only to others with whom he has associated. That shows how off base he is. It is wrong for a reporter to run money for a documentary through a tax-exempt foundation so that a business can score points with a foreign country. It is wrong for a newsman to promote an organization of which he is chair and not reveal that tie. Anderson's refusal to recognize this and his blindness to real or possible conflicts of interest do the damage to his credibility. As one of his former reporters observed, sadly, "He has turned into the same type of person he often writes about." *David Corn*

CORRECTION

In Jon Wiener's article "The C.I.A. Goes Back to College" [Dec. 12], David Gardner was incorrectly identified. He is president of the University of California.

In the December 19 issue, author Alisa Joyce ["China Takes the Reformist Road"] was incorrectly identified. She is a foreign reporter with *The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour* in Washington.

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Deconstructing de Man

JON WIENER

A scandal has erupted in the powerful school of literary criticism known as deconstruction. Recent revelations that Paul de Man, the Yale professor who founded the school in America, wrote more than one hundred articles for anti-Semitic, pro-Nazi newspapers in Belgium during World War II, has generated a great deal of comment about both the author and the politics of deconstruction. De Man, who died in 1984 at age 65, had concealed his political past from colleagues and students, who were shocked and dismayed by the revelations. In the month or so since his past was brought to light de Man has become something of an academic Waldheim.

In one of the articles in question, "Jews in Contemporary Literature," which appeared in March 1941, de Man examined the argument that "the Jews" had "polluted" modern literature. The article argued that "our civilization" had remained healthy by resisting "the Semitic infiltration of all aspects of European life." In another, he proposed that the Jews of Europe be sent to an island colony.

De Man's defenders acknowledge the seriousness of the revelations, but argue that the content of his collaborationist articles has been distorted. Neil Hertz, who teaches literature at Johns Hopkins University, points out that, of the ninety-two articles de Man is known to have published in the collaborationist Belgian newspaper *Le Soir*, only two were explicitly anti-Semitic. However, Jeffrey Mehlman of Boston University, a practitioner of deconstruction as well as the author of an influential book on anti-Semitism in French literature, explains that the rest included explicit calls for collaboration and numerous book reviews that "plugged the Nazi hit parade." An article of de Man's titled "Testimony on the War in France," published in March 1941, concluded that "no abyss separates the two peoples [French and German]. When a common task is presented, their agreement has been perfect. That is the principal teaching to be drawn from this beautiful book." The author of the book in question, Benoist-Méchin, later proposed that the French take up arms against the British and Americans. De Man's other wartime articles included references to Hitler's war as "the current revolution" and a statement that "the necessity of immediate collaboration should be obvious to every objective mind."

De Man, who came to the United States in 1947, successfully concealed his pro-Nazi past except for one or two incidents. In 1953, when he was a member of the prestigious Society of Fellows at Harvard, he was denounced, anonymously, perhaps by his ex-wife, as a former collaborator; Harvard asked him for a response. De Man then told a few friends, and apparently Harvard as well, that the charge was false and that he had in fact been a member of the Belgian resistance. The friends, who have asked not to be identified, accepted his response; today at least one of them describes that response as "a lie." De Man clearly told other people different things about his past. Juliet MacCannell was a student of his at Cornell in the mid-1960s; she now teaches comparative literature at the University of California, Irvine: "I asked him what he did during the war. He said, 'I went to England and worked as a translator.'" There was also the matter of de Man's relationship to the German literary critic Hans Robert Jauss. He wrote about Jauss in *Blindness and Insight* and brought Jauss to Yale as a guest lecturer in the mid-1970s; Jauss is now known to have served in the S.S.

De Man wrote very few blurbs for other authors' books. One of the few, MacCannell points out, was for Julia Kristeva's *Powers of Horror*, published in 1982, not long before de Man died. "That book looks like an apology for Céline's anti-Semitism," says MacCannell, who reviewed the book in the journal *Semiotica*. Kristeva's study "is very anti-Semitic itself." A chapter of Kristeva's is titled "'Ours to Jew or Die'"; in it, the author repeats Céline's anti-Semitic discourse in detail: that the Jew is "a fecalized, feminized, passivated rot." De Man singled out these sections of the book for praise, calling them "indispensable readings" and "illuminating and of general interest."

The debate over the collaborationist writings has become part of a wider questioning of the politics of deconstruction. J. Hillis Miller of the University of California, Irvine, the leading deconstructionist in the United States today and a friend of de Man, complains that journalists have defined deconstruction incorrectly, but he balks at providing a definition. He refers those who want to know what he thinks deconstruction is to his book, *The Ethics of Reading*. Edward Said, professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University, author of *The World, the Text, and the Critic* and a critic of deconstruction, provided a definition: Deconstruction is "a form of commentary that shows the connection between the stated content of a piece of writing and the rhetorical system which controls it. The connection establishes a discrepancy between the content and the rhetorical system. The deconstructive reading establishes the range of possible meanings that are thereby generated. In the range of decidable meanings, the deconstructed meaning locates itself." "The deconstructionists won't accept that," he adds. "Their whole point is that their positions are not paraphrasable."

Deconstruction claims that not only are books "texts," but that everything is at some level a text and thus "undecidable." De Man wrote that this is true even of the texts that "masquerade in the guise of wars or revolutions." ("Tell that to the veterans of foreign texts," a Yale historian remarked.) Critics on the left have argued that the presuppositions of deconstruction—that literature is not part of a knowable social and political reality, that one must be resigned to the impossibility of truth—make it at worst nihilistic or implicitly authoritarian and at best an academic self-indulgence.

Whatever the current reservations about it, de Man's work had a tremendous appeal, especially for students in the 1960s and 1970s. Even more than the New Criticism had, it freed literature from context and history, opening it to complex new meanings in a way that was fertile, inventive and playful. His work engaged the best of twentieth-century philosophy. At the same time he made criticism *the* creative ac-

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tivity of the period; the novel might have been dead, but criticism had become the inheritor of the ambitions of art. The critic could create meaning. And de Man's writing was brilliant.

Deborah Esch, who teaches English at the University of Toronto and was a student of de Man's from 1979 to 1983, said, "de Man provided his students with a set of tools for reading, the most important function of which may be the unmasking of ideology. What we call ideology, he showed, entails taking a linguistic construct for a natural reality. This questioning of the authority of language yielded the most subversive pedagogy I know."

To those who would read de Man's mature work with an eye to his youthful publications, Hillis Miller responds, "I see no connection between de Man's collaborationist writings and deconstruction." But not everyone agrees. Mehlman points to de Man's chapter on Rousseau's *Confessions* in *Allegories of Reading*. There de Man writes that "it is always possible" to "excuse any guilt" because "the experience always exists simultaneously as fictional discourse and as empirical event and it is never possible to decide which one of the two possibilities is the right one. The indecision makes it possible to excuse the bleakest of crimes." Is it possible to read this now without thinking of de Man's collaboration?

De Man's discussion of forgetting in his classic essay "Literary History and Literary Modernity" from *Blindness and Insight* is full of references to a hidden past. He discusses Nietzsche's conception of "a past that . . . is so threatening that it has to be forgotten." He quotes Nietzsche's observation that we undertake "the destruction and dissolution of the past in order to be able to live," we "try to give ourselves a new past from which we should have liked to descend." But for Nietzsche, de Man writes, "the rejection of the past is not so much an act of forgetting as an act of critical judgment directed against himself."

Frank Lentricchia, who teaches at Duke University, argued in his book *Criticism and Social Change* that this chapter of de Man's "shades into political allegory." That was a prescient argument. De Man persistently emphasized the significance of allegory. He argued that what makes allegories interesting is that they are haunted by a meaning that has come before.

De Man's critique of history is also relevant. He goes beyond the useful post-structuralist point that facts about the past are structured like texts; Lentricchia writes that de Man "is saying that history is an imitation of what he has defined as the literary," a "projection . . . of all those paralytic feelings of the literary onto the terrain of society and history." This argument leads to passivity, which, Lentricchia says, is "the most genuine meaning of political conservatism," and that is the message of de Manian deconstruction in the United States.

According to Anson Rabinbach, an intellectual historian at Cooper Union, the young de Man became a Fascist the way many intellectuals did in Europe in 1940: "They had a sense of malaise, of having been defeated by history." They turned to Fascism, hoping that it would provide a route to cultural renewal, but eventually abandoned it. The connection between de Man's early and mature writings, Rabinbach argues, "is not in their content, which is quite different; it is in the attitude of exhaustion in the face of politics, the feeling of despair at the possibilities that history offers."

However, Gerald Graff, of Northwestern University, author of *Literature Against Itself* and *Professing Literature*, is much more cautious in his approach to the connection between de Man's early writing and deconstruction. He observes that "people who adopt deconstructionist positions have various sorts of politics—including radical feminism and other progressive commitments—so an attempt to smear all de Manian deconstruction with de Man's past is unfair." But, Graff went on, "there is an irony here, since deconstructionists have a problem appealing to what politicians call 'deniability.' One of the themes of deconstruction is that the position you try to separate yourself from tends to reappear as a repressed motif in your own text." Graff does suggest that an episode like this one, "may make some theorists think twice about claiming that the reality of historical events is indeterminate, and that insisting on this indeterminacy is politically subversive." Graff also thinks it important to emphasize that the overall effect of the current trend toward theory, including deconstruction, "has been an overwhelmingly democratic and progressive force which has raised central questions about the politics of language and culture which orthodox literary study still resists."

Whatever one makes of the politics of deconstruction, both followers and critics of Paul de Man will have to examine his past more thoroughly. In particular they will have to ask what de Man could have known about the fate of European Jews, and when could he have known it? De Man's collaborationist articles appeared in 1941 and 1942. Raoul Hilberg, a Holocaust historian at the University of Vermont, was quoted in *The New York Times* as saying that educated Belgians like de Man "knew by 1941 or at the latest, 1942, that Jews were being sent eastward to be exterminated." That is wrong, says Arno Mayer, a Princeton historian and author of a forthcoming book on the "final solution." "'Auschwitz' is not likely to have had any concrete meaning in Belgium in 1942. No one had a clear picture of the fate of even Poland's Jews before Germany's attack on Russia in June 1941."

The first train of Belgian Jews left Malines, near Brussels, on August 4, 1942, and arrived at Auschwitz the next day. It contained 998 people, of whom 428 were women, eighty were young boys and sixty girls. According to Maxime Steinberg's book *Dossier Bruxelles-Auschwitz*, 254 were gassed on arrival. These deportations were public information; the collaborationist Belgian newspaper *Défense du Peuple* wrote on August 8, 1942, "The Jews are being forced to work the way we do. They are charging others with assassinating them because they are being asked to work. Reserve your pity for the members of your own race suffering from this Jewish war." De Man must have been aware of this.

But "at that time it wasn't clear what it meant for Jews to be sent to the east," Mayer reports. The Nazis demanded that all the occupied countries provide manpower for compulsory labor service in Germany. As a result, Mayer says, the deportation of Jews, especially in 1942, "seemed less aberrant; it desensitized the population to the Jews' fate." The

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last of the de Man pieces which have been discovered is dated October 20, 1942. If he stopped his pro-Nazi writings at this point—which is not yet certain—his last collaborationist article appeared before he could have known of the extermination of the Jews. Nevertheless, one can assume that the young journalist who urged isolating Europe's Jews on an island did not find the deportations of 1942 objectionable.

And there was plenty going on that de Man did know about: Belgium's first anti-Jewish law was passed in October 1940; it required that Jews register with the government and expelled them from the professions of law, teaching, journalism and government service. De Man's article on whether Jews "pollute" modern fiction appeared five months later. On May 31, 1941, Belgian Jews were forced to sell their businesses; in August 1941 they were restricted to four cities and subjected to a curfew. De Man certainly knew all that. Yet in December 1941, he published an article praising Drieu la Rochelle, a leading collaborator, for "the elan and conviction with which [he] has thrown himself into the creation of a radically new type of human being." As of June 1, 1942, Belgian Jews were required to wear the yellow star. Hendrik de Man, Paul's uncle, a former Socialist leader who had joined the collaborationist government, changed his mind about his affiliation and fled from Belgium in 1941; yet Paul remained and he continued to publish, at least until October 1942.

"Anyone who thinks that he left this all behind him, that it did not motivate the life and career that followed, is crazy," Lentricchia says. "He came here in 1947 at age 28 with a Belgian wife and son; he divorced his wife when he got here, and didn't speak to his son ever again. The man tried very hard to separate himself from his Belgian collaborationist past, to cut that thing out of himself. I think he suffered, he wished he never did it. He didn't start graduate school until 1952, when he was 33. What was he doing before that? Working in a bookstore, working for a publisher—a brilliant man, prepared for a literary career, who does nothing for several years. Why?

"Then you come to deconstruction: a philosophy that says you can never trust language to anchor you into anything; that every linguistic act is duplicitous; that every insight you have is beset by blindness you can't predict. In an attempt to undercut politically engaged critics, de Man writes that whatever you thought about political events is not the case. His mature work is not just ahistorical; it is a principled, intentional, passionate antihistoricism. He didn't just say 'forget history'; he wanted to paralyze the move to history. And the work is beautifully rigorous. There's not a better example in the world."

Colleagues and students admired de Man not only for his scholarship but because he "was exemplary in his relations with people," Hertz says. "You used him as a standard for your own conduct. He was something special." Lentricchia disagrees: "The real problem of the de Manians is hero worship—the spectacle of grown men and women idolizing another person. That is O.K. for 14-year-olds, but not for adults. And it's very bad to communicate this hero worship to students. It's politically ugly. Students need independence, scrutiny, self-reliance."

De Man's defenders argue that they should get credit for making his pro-Nazi writings public. The collaborationist articles were discovered this past summer by a Belgian graduate student, Ortwin de Graef. In late October, Jacques Derrida, the renowned French philosopher and literary theorist who founded deconstruction, brought copies to the United States to a meeting of deconstructionists. At this conference, held in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, in late October and attended by some twenty persons, they discussed how to handle the material. Critics of the school describe this meeting as an exercise in "damage control."

The deconstructionists decided to publish de Man's pro-Nazi articles in a special issue of the *Oxford Literary Review* in April, eight months after their discovery. The dozen articles of de Man's originally published in Flemish will appear in English, but the ninety-two articles in French will not be translated. "We feel that anyone interested in these materials ought to read them in the original," Hertz said. In fact, that will discourage anyone but experts from examining the documents or taking part in the debate. De Man's defenders were surprised when *The New York Times* published an article on the controversy in early December, and have been angered by the press coverage, which they regard as premature, misleading and inaccurate. "I don't think this is a matter for journalists and newspapers," says Werner Hamacher of Johns Hopkins University, an organizer of the special issue.

Although it has become routine to refer to de Man's "hundred collaborationist articles," neither the complete contents nor the total number of de Man's wartime writings are known at this time. De Graef found ninety-two appearing in *Le Soir* between February 1941 and June 1942; of those, only eighteen are being distributed by the deconstructionists. De Graef's list ends with a handwritten parenthetical note, "probably another twenty to thirty in the period July-December 1942." However, he now reports that June 1942 is the date of the last of the *Le Soir* articles. Other scholars working backward from October 1941 have found articles de Man published in *Le Soir* between January and July 1941; they have not yet examined 1940. (The Nazis conquered Belgium in May 1940.) The last of de Man's articles in the Flemish collaborationist journal *Het Vlaamsche Land* is dated October 20, 1942. The date at which de Man stopped writing pro-Nazi articles is extremely significant; all we know now is that he was writing in October 1942, and perhaps later.

The publication of de Man's pro-Nazi articles in the *Oxford Literary Review* will be accompanied by comments from critics; fifty have been invited to contribute, including both those who have previously supported his work and those who have criticized it. Some have refused to contribute; one critic who was very close to de Man but asked not to be identified, commented, "I am shocked that there is a symposium. Paul must have known the Jews of Belgium were being carted away. We are discussing the butchery of the Belgian Jewish community, down to the babies. To treat this as one more item about which to have a symposium is outrageous. The people who are organizing this have lost all moral perspective; they are so much under the sway of the man they cannot bear to consider what they are doing."

The de Man materials came to light not long after revelations about Martin Heidegger, the German philosopher acknowledged by Derrida as the intellectual progenitor of deconstruction. Heidegger's commitment to Nazism was much stronger than has previously been realized, according to a new book by Victor Farrias published in France. A reevaluation of the politics of deconstruction and the writings of de Man is now at the top of the agenda of both the deconstructionists and their critics. □

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The Book of Lists

DEBORAH MEIER AND FLORENCE MILLER

WHAT DO OUR 17-YEAR-OLDS KNOW? *By Diane Ravitch and Chester E. Finn, Jr. Harper & Row. 293 pp. $15.95.*

When Jean Piaget noted that 6-year-olds gave surprisingly ignorant answers to his simple questions, he didn't rush into print with the information. How interesting, he thought. The answers I expected are not self-evident. Thus began a life's work of examining children's ignorance.

Seventh-grader Mariette points to the sky when asked which way is north. How interesting, thinks her teacher! For Mariette, "north" is "up." How shall I help her think about north and south as opposed to up and down? Reframe my question? Dig up useful evidence? Explore with her the way she thinks and be mindful that once told she's wrong, she is likely to mask her ignorance with the right answers yet still be confused about "north" and "up."

Ignorance is interesting and useful to many thoughtful toilers in the vineyards of education, and while Diane Ravitch and Chester E. Finn Jr. also toil in those vineyards, she at Columbia, he at Vanderbilt University and in the U.S. Department of Education, their view of ignorance is familiar and fruitless. They miss the vital connection between knowing and not knowing, and because they do so, not knowing is failure, or bad schooling—a case in need of a remedy, a cause for alarm, a reason to rush into print.

Under the aegis of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, and with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Ravitch and Finn and a panel of experts they chose developed two lengthy questionnaires designed to determine at mid-eleventh grade whether students know what the authors think they should about history and literature.

Deborah Meier is the director of Central Park East, a public school in New York City's East Harlem, and the recipient of a John D. and Catherine MacArthur Award.
Florence Miller is a New York City teacher, counselor and writer.

The literature section is a mixed bag that includes Moses, *Romeo and Juliet*, Cinderella, Aesop, Hemingway, Goliath, *Gulliver's Travels*, Mars, Cain and Abel, *Julius Caesar*, King Arthur, Jonah, Sherlock Holmes, *Hamlet*, Pandora, *Genesis*, Martin Luther King Jr., Dickinson, Melville, Zeus, Atlas, *Macbeth*, the *Iliad*, Poe, Noah, *A Raisin in the Sun*, "Blood, Sweat and Tears" (the speech, not the group), Byron, Pip, *Beowulf*, Fitzgerald, Yeats, Wordsworth, Chaucer, Ibsen, Ellison, Joyce, Blake, Bunyan, Conrad, Dostoevsky, Hughes, London, Dickens, Daedalus, "Rappacini's Daughter." And more.

The history section includes Harriet Tubman, Pearl Harbor, Watergate, Lindbergh, Jamestown, Prohibition, the cotton gin, secession, Susan B. Anthony, the *Brown* decision, Sputnik, checks and balances, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Gold Rush, Hitler, the Ku Klux Klan, the Bill of Rights, Winston Churchill, Jim Crow, the Magna Carta, Betty Friedan, Reconstruction, *Common Sense*, D-Day, Jane Addams, Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, Ida Tarbell, the Seneca Falls Declaration, Lyndon Johnson, isolationism, John Winthrop, the Scopes trial, the Three-Fifths Compromise, John D. Rockefeller, Eisenhower, the Dust Bowl, Stalin, the Monroe Doctrine, laissez faire, the Missouri Compromise, Joe McCarthy. And more.

The questions are in the familiar multiple-choice format.

> *The Return of the Native*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge* were written by:
> a. Sir Walter Scott
> b. Thomas Hardy
> c. Oscar Wilde
> d. Robert Louis Stevenson
>
> Which of the following was NOT addressed by New Deal legislation?
> a. Agricultural price supports
> b. Labor unions
> c. Social Security
> d. Restrictions on immigration

The authors score the test with 90 as A, below 60 as failing. They correlate the results with demographic data, tell us what it all means and offer recommendations. Graphed and in tables, their findings confirm their suspicion that our schools and pedagogy are failing.

There are major and minor irritants throughout. *People* is sniffed at, *TV Guide* gets a footnote. Public funding paid for six pages of acknowledgments, with special thanks to the woman who spent Mother's Day reading a draft of the manuscript. Under the scary heading "A Generation at Risk," Ravitch and Finn offer fifty pages of dusty recommendations, all of which recall undergraduate papers for Aims of Education 101, written in the hope that the professor wouldn't notice how wide the margins were:

> Devote more time to the teaching and learning of history.
> Devote more time and attention to teaching literature, beginning in the earliest grades and continuing in every year of elementary school, junior high school and high school.
> A hefty dose of good literature should be part of all students' English studies.
> Only those who are well educated in history or literature should teach those subjects in the schools.
> The historical interconnections among different nations and societies should be understood.

There are statements that defy analysis:

> The power of the facts-versus-concepts dichotomy has grown so great within the social studies field that some professionals now harbor an instinctive distrust of facts per se.
> It is fatuous to believe that students can think critically or conceptually when they are ignorant of the most basic facts of American history.
> When public libraries and museums celebrate Black History Month, for example, exhibitions should be designed not merely to commemorate some aspect of black history, but as an education for visitors who know little or nothing about the past.

They flip and they flop. Multiple-choice tests have "defects." "We were aware that many thoughtful people mistrust multiple-choice tests . . . we shared most of those doubts." Nevertheless, test data are "hard documentation" and "the results of this assessment reveal serious gaps in 17-year-olds' basic knowledge of history and literature."

The study comes down against teaching skills without content but insists that students cannot engage in critical thinking unless they have "prior knowledge of the material they are reading." In other words, teach content without thought. They approve of student discussion and Paideia-like seminars, but given the prior knowledge requirement, the chances of struggling through the masses of prerequisite information to the cool reaches of reasoned thought seem remote indeed.

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HYPOCRISY: AMERICA'S LEADING EXPORT

Under the cover of "making the world safe for democracy", the U.S. has countless Military interventions and covert operations directed at destabilizing sovereign nations and popularly supported governments. Washington, D.C.'s rhetoric about democratic rights is twice over a fraud. Its global exploits have more to do with propping up multinational corporate interests than with the export of democracy. And the U.S. record on democracy at home is abysmal.

The U.S. is ranked near the bottom of some 75 world-wide electoral democracies in voter participation. A maze of legislation and regulations restricts voter registration and impedes access to the ballot for insurgents and independents. A steady erosion of the fairness doctrine has led to monopolization of the media by heavily funded major party candidates. And genuine public debate on critical social and foreign policy issues is stifled by the lack of democratic process.

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Theodore Sizer, author of *Horace's Compromise*, seems to be one of their good guys, but they weren't paying attention. Less, Sizer says, is usually more.

For Ravitch and Finn right answers mean good schooling. Twenty-four percent of those tested matched Thomas Hardy with *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. That's bad schooling. A stunning 94 percent got Noah right. Good schooling? They call their 60 percent cutoff for passing "generous," but few junior high math teachers or graduate school professors would risk using that figure on an exam given a year or more after their courses were taken. So, what exactly is being measured here? If the 8,000 students questioned had all scored 90 percent or more, would that mean schools were successfully teaching literature and history?

There are good and proper reasons to scrutinize the state of American education. Too few students have read any of the books on the questionnaire from cover to cover. Most have experienced our best authors in a hit-and-run fashion as they rush through curricula oriented to tests like this one. Too few have had the opportunity to engage in thoughtful discussion about the books they've read. Too few have been directed back to the text to support their feelings or opinions or preferences.

Too few express strong convictions about anything they are exposed to in school. Seldom have they been encouraged to abandon their present identities long enough to enter the unfamiliar worlds created by authors, thus making themselves vulnerable to the expansion of experience and insight that good literature offers. It is not the nod of recognition nor crossword puzzle savanterie that identifies the well-schooled person. It is habits of the mind.

There's a ferment in the world of school policy today and a lively discourse is going on, for a change. Good minds have been set to work figuring out how pesky human beings actually learn and are trying to relate that knowledge to schooling. It's a lively and unfinished conversation. Best of all, there's an exhilarating consensus that there is no one best answer to many of these questions, although there are clearly some very bad ones.

It is a time too of discussion about the aims of education. The business community sees the goals of education as outperforming Japan, curing the ills of our economy and providing a useful labor pool. Academics call for schools that produce students prepared to handle subject matter in the way college professors dish it out. But there are those who point out that neither the employer nor the academy is the rightful beneficiary of a good education. Such people declare that the principal function of secondary education is to create a lively and strong civic culture, an active citizenry with the knowledge and understanding requisite for engaging in reasonable and responsible discourse, an education as rigorous for those who go straight to work as for the college-bound. In other words, the cosmetic surgeon and the cosmetician need an equally sound liberal education.

The argument for the humanities, which Ravitch and Finn are so passionately eager to strengthen, traditionally rests upon this latter claim. In the foreword to *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know?*, Lynne Cheney writes that the study of the humanities "can expand the mind and enlarge the soul." She quotes Thomas Jefferson to the effect that the study of history "will qualify (people) as judges of the actions and designs of men."

Oh, the dangers of fooling around with original intent! Repeating well-worn phrases about history and literature as guarantors of democracy is naïve or cynical. Free schooling in a democratic society was a novel and exciting prospect in Jefferson's time. Two hundred years later, we are forced to acknowledge that successful, universal schooling can coexist with tyranny and gulags. Education alone is no guarantor of democracy.

How schools educate is then critical. Schools can cherish or ignore, prize or disdain habits of mind. Schools may preach respect for knowledge of the past, but if students are rushed through hundreds, perhaps thousands of years using generalizations as mileposts, such respect is not demonstrated and not learned. Sweeping survey courses given to the young and inexperienced student are essentially disrespectful of the complexities and subtleties of history. We telescope a thousand years of ancient Greek history so that we seem to be looking at a single coherent society that barely changes over ten centuries. There is no time to consider the nature of evidence, the credibility of witnesses. To help youngsters who, by virtue of their youth, distinguish poorly between a hundred and a thousand years, we pin catchy

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labels onto events, labels that often hide more than they reveal. In the rush to cover the curriculum, there is no time to examine those who stood in the way of Progress. Only the winners are remembered. The Vince Lombardi school of history.

History as a discipline for citizenship needs to be treated with the respect we ask our students to use in examining the present. Only thus will history serve to assist in developing the dispositions that might serve our society well, that might "expand the mind and enlarge the soul." With such habits of mind people are ready to consider alternate viewpoints and possibilities, weigh evidence with care, look cautiously at claims of cause and effect. Such habits of mind include a romance with the past that stays in place long enough to come alive.

And time is a factor. The current interest in re-examining schools and education's goals won't last long, if an educated backward glance means anything. The struggle to put deeper and more authentic content and pedagogy into our schools will not be easy, at best, and will require its proponents to do battle with well-entrenched customs and interests. The textbook publishers and the testing corporations—the two are often the same—are waiting in the wings to see which way the wind will finally blow. Then they will rush in with sure-fire solutions: Curriculum from Kindergarten to Twelfth Grade, Guaranteed to Improve Scores on the Latest National Assessment in History; Sixty Days to Mastery of the 5,000 Words Every Cultured Person Should Know by the Age of 17; 100 Days to 100 Great Books.

Following the publishers and the testers will come the busy local and state curriculum teams, with their scores, sequences, stanines, pretests and posttests at the ready. *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know?* seems written for just such a constituency. Given the influence of Ravitch and Finn, new curriculums are probably already in the making. If so, we will have foreclosed on the real debate and be witness to one more cycle of alarm and reform, swinging from fad to fad and never digging deep. We'll move from the mindless teaching of skills to the mindless teaching of content as measured by mindless multiple-choice tests. We'll have missed the opportunity to develop a responsible approach to schooling, one that disdains the quick fix, that probes beneath the obvious, one undismayed by ignorance and ambiguity, one patient in the face of tough and persistent issues, one first and foremost attentive to developing thoughtful, educated citizens. □

What They Do Know

ETTA MOOSER

To the recent books lamenting the level of cultural literacy of the young, Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* and E.D. Hirsch Jr.'s *Cultural Literacy*, we can add the mistitled *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know?* In that work, funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities, Diane Ravitch and Chester E. Finn Jr. present what they take to be a devastating assessment of the lack of historical and literary knowledge among the young, as measured by a multiple-choice exam administered to a varied sample of 7,812 high school juniors. Their stated goals were simple enough: to provide some reliable information about the present condition of basic knowledge in these areas; to provide baseline data for further testing; and to extend our knowledge about the state of teaching literature and history in the high schools. Their recommendations, however, suggest that their agenda is indeed grander: They envision a society whose cultural base is homogeneously Western; they imply an educational theory premised on the Lockean "tabula rasa" view of the mind and a spectator view of knowledge, whereby knowledge is seen as something objective and inert rather than subjective and changing. Most important, their work fails to offer any insights about what these students do know.

The tables and graphs that fill the middle portion of the book provide statistical data on correct answers and chart the relationship between test scores and the personal information that students provided. There is nothing new here. The highest scores went to whites and Asians, students from "literate" homes and students of college-educated parents. In the final section the authors' rhetorical call for deeper understanding and critical thinking rings hollow. They acknowledge the inherent contradiction between their testing methodology and their recommendations, which call for history and literature to be taught in the context of political and economic trends, focusing on the commonality of human experience. They argue that more time in the school day should be devoted to the study of geography, history and literature, and they call on the media to find ways to popularize history and make it come alive. There is nothing in this work that suggests how that can be accomplished. Nor is there attention paid to the fact that persistent inequalities in the social structure undermine not only the form of schooling but also the message the schools impart.

There is no acknowledgment of basic contradictions between school knowledge and the lived experience of many of our students. For example, the authors lament that only one-third of our students know the meaning of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Given the fact that our schools are as segregated today as they were in 1954, is it any wonder that students sitting in segregated classrooms have trouble remembering *Brown v. Board of Education*? This generation of young people have had their political and historical philosophies formed by UB40, Bob Marley and Bruce Springsteen, whose roots lie in Dylan and the Beatles, not Plato or Montesquieu. Rock music's egalitarian message, its antiauthoritarian stand, its acknowledgment of the hollowness of much of American society and its focus on impending natural or man-made disaster make up, along with messages our young people get on TV and in the streets, a realm of knowledge and a world view that is at odds with much of the school curriculum. More hours in history class, more great literature in the syllabus, will not help bridge the gulf between school knowledge and lived reality. This also stems from the fact that the world as experienced by this generation seems a far more treacherous place than the Ozzie and Harriet world of my generation or the Horatio Alger world that is still the standard stuff of the school curriculum.

Ravitch and Finn would have done us a tremendous service if they had in fact told us what our 17-year-olds do know.

Etta Mooser is an education researcher at U.C.L.A. and a substitute teacher at Laguna Beach High School. *She would like to thank the Laguna Beach High School Continuation students for their help in formulating the questions.*

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From such results, we could have learned how to teach this generation of students, by knowing how they interpret the information they get in school and from their culture. These students do know something—maybe not what Ravitch, Finn et al. think they should know, but they have ideas and a world view, however different from ours, and we need to know what that view is. This is essential, if only for the simple pedagogical reason that in order for learning to occur, new knowledge must be connected to some existing knowledge held by the learner. Sixty-nine percent of the students tested in this study identified Emily Dickinson's poetry as dealing with death. This seems a remarkably high number and should raise questions as to why they know of her poetry. Perhaps the high score reveals something about this generation's obsession with death, or it may simply suggest that the length of many of her poems makes them accessible. The important question is, What was it that allowed so many teen-agers to remember her work?

The National Endowment for the Humanities might have better spent its money by offering teachers the opportunity to develop new ways to understand the world of their students. Perhaps it ought to have funded a cultural literacy test for teachers based on the culture in which their students live. The first few questions might read:

1. Who are the Fat Boys?
   a. The antagonists in *A Tale of Two Cities*
   b. A rap group
   c. What Betsy Ross called the Founding Fathers
   d. Rockefeller, Vanderbilt and Mellon

2. What is the most common punishment for first-time train-painting offenders?
   a. Scrubbing the trains
   b. 150 long-division problems
   c. A one-man show on Avenue A

3. Where would you find Alex, Malorie, Andrew and Jennifer?
   a. At Rikers Island
   b. Too often on TV
   c. In Congress

4. What does Crankie Frankie put into the meat grinder?
   a. His frozen dinner
   b. The Salt II treaty
   c. Memos from the President
   d. His school books

5. Who is Bob Dylan?
   a. Irish novelist
   b. Who cares?
   c. TV evangelist
   d. Opening act for the Dead

6. "Holiday in Cambodia" refers to:
   a. The Johnson Administration's exploits in that country
   b. A new travel program offered to boost Continental Airlines' sagging travel business
   c. Song by the Dead Kennedys

7. What is the difference between Afghanistan and Nicaragua?
   a. One is a source of drugs, the other merely a transfer point
   b. One is fighting a right-wing insurgency, the other a left-wing insurgency
   c. One has good surf, the other none

8. Beef Baloney is best enjoyed on:
   a. White bread with mayonnaise
   b. A hero sandwich
   c. A tape player

9. The best place to "chill" is:
   a. In the bathroom at school
   b. In the refrigerator
   c. At your crib

10. What do William Casey and Bob Marley have in common?
   a. They were characters in *A Christmas Carol*
   b. They both played for the Yankees
   c. Were in the original cast of *I Spy*
   d. Both died of brain disorders

For answers to the above questions, ask any 17-year-old who isn't chilling. □

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FILMS.

JAMES LARDNER

Repentance
Walker

Recovering from an auto accident that almost killed him, the Soviet Georgian director Tengiz Abuladze decided that "if I should live and be able to work again I would do something that really mattered." He began planning a film about the death of a provincial tyrant not unlike Stalin's sidekick Lavrenti Beria. Nothing that was happening on the national political scene suggested an opening for such a project—it was 1981, and reports of Leonid Brezhnev's death were still slightly exaggerated—but Eduard Shevardnadze had become the party leader in Georgia, and with his approval Abuladze contrived to make his film for Georgian television, under a rule that permitted the production of one cultural program a year without oversight from Moscow. At the end of 1984 the state film committee, Goskino, took a look at the completed work, and shelved it.

Normally, that would have been the end of the story, but the next two years brought three Kremlin successions, an upheaval in the Soviet filmmakers' association and the naming of a new head of Goskino; and last spring, in one of *glasnost*'s most telling moments, *Repentance* was released. It has since been seen by millions of Soviet citizens, entered in film festivals from Cannes to Colorado and offered as the official Soviet nominee for that most surreal of prizes, the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film.

Like Mikhail Gorbachev's speech on the seventieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, Abuladze's film may not live up to a lot of Westerners' expectations. Like Gorbachev's speech, too, *Repentance* is about the dangers of burying the past, only the burial here is literal: that of Varlam Aravidze, the maniacal mayor of a Georgian town. The townspeople are divided in their feelings for the departed, but unanimous, it seems, in their desire to put him away with a minimum of fuss. Someone, how-

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ever, has a different idea; three times Varlam is buried, and three times his body reappears in the backyard of his son and daughter-in-law. The police stake out the cemetery and apprehend the disentomber, who turns out to be a middle-aged woman. On trial, she dredges up stories that no one wants to hear and declares that Varlam's body "should be cast to the ravens," because "to bury him is to forgive him."

In flashback, we meet the living Varlam, a jowly demon who understands that tyranny is show business, and the defendant's father, Sandro Baratelli, a Christ-like artist and defender of the weak (and a symbol of culture and religiosity). Varlam has a thing about Sandro; he enjoys terrorizing him. Dressed in a preposterous getup—sort of a black union suit with leather suspenders—he pays late-night visits to the Baratellis' house, sings arias to them, and showers them with roses, even as he is apologizing for the latest abuses of "my overzealous aides." When he has finished playing these games, he has Sandro arrested and "exiled, without the right to correspond," as his wife is succinctly informed.

In the present, we see how the daughter's testimony has stirred the community and, above all, Varlam's family. The dead man's grandson, going slowly mad, demands to know if the accusations are true. "Your grandfather never did any wrong," his father says. "Those were complicated times." "What do the times have to do with it?" the grandson scornfully replies.

Repentance is more than the first anti-Stalinist film to be seen in the Soviet Union; it is anti-stalinist with a small "s." Abuladze could have set his whole story in the removed world of the 1940s and 1950s; instead, he goes after current villains—the middle-aged apparatchiks of his own generation, who, he seems to be saying, have closed off the future by refusing to face the past. By all accounts, the indictment has struck home. Abuladze has done what he set out to do: he has made something that matters.

Perhaps it is presumptuous to judge such a film outside its intended context and in ignorance of most of its allusions. ("Every episode," Abuladze has said, is "based on fact.") Those who like their allegories to live on the literal as well as the symbolic level, however, will have trouble with *Repentance*. Varlam's enemies and heirs, for all their afflictions, are not a very believable or engaging lot. In the effort to make these characters stand for forces larger than themselves, Abuladze has drained the juices from them. (What grandson has ever been so discombobulated by the crimes of his grandfather?) Only Varlam himself grabs our attention, and most of the credit for that goes to a wonderful, outsized performance by a Georgian actor named Avtandil Makharadze.

Repentance also suffers from a tone problem. There are moments of giddy humor, as when Sandro's mentor, having named 2,700 co-conspirators in a plot to poison the corn supply and build a tunnel from London to Bombay, explains the purpose of his confession thusly: "We must accuse as many people as possible—until the number becomes astronomical. Then someone will notice, and punish the true malefactors." To call Abuladze's film satirical, however, would be to ignore long passages in which the material is treated straight. And though the story is framed in a dream, the dream motif is not sustained, aesthetically or logically. And within Sandro's daughter's dream are what appear to be the dreams of other characters—an act of artistic carelessness, it seems to me.

Repentance is being distributed by Cannon Films, which supposedly paid $1 million for the privilege. In an interview, Abuladze complained that none of this money would necessarily flow back to the Georgian studio, Gruzia Film, which he heads and which badly needs funds for new equipment. He has not complained, evidently—nor has anyone else—about doing business with a movie company that owes its present eminence to the popularity of those eloquent advocates of better East-West understanding, Chuck Norris and Charles Bronson. Whatever *perestroika*'s legacy may prove to be for other realms of the Soviet economy, real change, clearly, is coming to the Soviet film industry. What next? Perhaps Cannon will join the rush of Western companies trying to make films in the Soviet Union. The Moscow subway would certainly make a picturesque backdrop for *Death Wish V*.

Walker, like *Repentance*, is being billed as the work of a bold filmmaker bucking the odds to make a movie that confronts the system. *Walker* is the story of a freelance American imperialist who had himself named President of Nicaragua in 1855. The director, Alex Cox, and screenwriter, Rudy Wurlitzer, were determined to avoid "a serious docu-

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drama, one of these boring things the English make," to quote Cox, who is himself English (he directed *Sid and Nancy* and *Repo Man*). Rather than risk getting waist-deep in the big muddy of verisimilitude, Cox and Wurlitzer decided to treat the historical Walker as Brecht might have treated him—as a springboard for a movie that "walks the line between comic opera and drama," to quote Wurlitzer.

It can't have been easy to raise money for a leftie film that would be shot largely in Nicaragua, and one can well imagine the conniptions that Hollywood agents must have gone into (the coke spoons hurled to the floor, the smashed BMW dashboards, etc.) on learning that their clients proposed to take part in such a project. Ed Harris, who plays Walker, turned down a $750,000 job to work for a considerably smaller fee. Once on location, "the production team grappled daily with shortages," a press release informs us, and "the simple act of getting ice and soft drinks on the set was often difficult." Adversity forced the producers of *Walker*, like their host government, into the Communist embrace; unable to bring in prop weapons from Hollywood, they bought their guns from the Soviet Union.

If only a *contra* brigade had attacked the set and burned every inch of film, the story of *Walker* would have a worthy ending. Unfortunately, the filmmakers escaped with their work intact.

Walker has, by my count, two comic ideas. One is to put into the mouths of its nineteenth-century characters the sort of dialogue you might find scrawled over a movie poster in a subway station.

"Nicaragua is a fucked-up little country somewhere south of here," Cornelius Vanderbilt (a backer of Walker's) is made to say.

"I like small men—small puritans obsessed by power," the wife of a Nicaraguan politician says to Walker in the course of seducing him. The next morning she assures him, "You were very good last night—not great, but for a gringo very good."

"It's the same racist, sexist, macho shit we turned our backs on!" a black member of Walker's retinue exclaims, upon hearing of plans to reintroduce slavery into Nicaragua.

And on and on. If Wurlitzer and Cox thought they could sustain an entire movie with this level of wit, it may be that they were drunk with their other comic idea: that of using tangible anachronisms—computers, automobiles, a helicopter, a cover of *Newsweek*—to emphasize that Walker's descendants are alive and well and working in the Reagan White House. Not that they could let such an important point go unarticulated. "It is our destiny to control you people," Walker tells a throng of Nicaraguans shortly before fleeing the country. "So no matter how much you fight, no matter what you think, we will be back time and time again." It would have been tempting to call this dialogue unspeakable, if Ed Harris had not, as a technical matter, succeeded in speaking it.

Stylistically, *Walker* attacks convention and grabs on at the same time, rather like a weary boxer who keeps resorting to the clinch. Except for the anachronisms and the politics, this is just another Hollywood anti-western—another shabby imitation of *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (and *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, which Wurlitzer also wrote). All the standard devices are here: the country-western Muzak, the slapstick brawls, the slo-mo violence. And *Walker* is an expensive film, no matter what its accountants may have to say on that point. In *Repentance* you can see Abuladze struggling to tell his story without crowd scenes, special effects or elaborate sets. In *Walker* you see Cox and Wurlitzer struggling to come up with a story worthy of the production values. They may see themselves as the antidote to the Attenboroughization of the colonial struggle, but Sir Dickie would not be ashamed to make a movie with the resources at *Walker*'s command.

Some of those resources appear to have been provided at bargain rates. A plan to shoot half the film in Mexico was abandoned when shooting in Nicaragua turned out to be cheaper than anticipated, partly because of the government's willingness to make historic and scenic locations available and to remove power and telephone lines as needed. For battle scenes, the filmmakers were permitted to command "actual Sandinista troops, under their regular officers," according to the press release (which does not say how these reassignments may have affected the war against the *contras*). You have to admire the networking skills of a group of people who have managed to do business with the Nicaraguan government, the Roman Catholic Church and Universal Pictures simultaneously. You also have to wonder if the leaders of any of these institutions, after viewing the finished product, will ever again be such easy marks. Cox has said that he wanted to make a film about "white guys coming to small countries thinking they can do anything." *Walker* is about that, exactly. □

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FILMS.

MARK GEVISSER

Cry Freedom

Richard Attenborough's latest political epic is dominated by a voice that cries freedom a little more earnestly, a little more plaintively than anyone else's—his own. Having left the Indies, he has now focused his sweeping lens upon South Africa, where he recounts the story of the white liberal newspaper editor Donald Woods (Kevin Kline) who was galvanized into political action through his relationship with Steve Biko, the founder of South Africa's Black Consciousness Movement.

Perhaps the most dynamic black leader the country has ever seen, Biko was only 30 when he was caught slipping out of the magisterial district to which a banning order had confined him. He was thrown into prison, and twenty-four days later it was announced that he had died in detention—of "natural causes." In the outrage that followed Woods used his editorials to demand an inquest, and it was then discovered that Biko had been beaten nearly to death before being sent on a journey along bumpy roads to a hospital in Pretoria—more than 700 miles away. Woods's activism eventually resulted in his own banning. In order to evade this and publish his own biography of Biko, Woods and his family arranged a dramatic escape to Lesotho, whence, as the last sequence of Attenborough's film testifies, they flew off to freedom.

It is difficult to imagine how Biko

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might respond to Richard Attenborough's history of his cause and country. *Cry Freedom* might itself be said to indict white liberals, proving how their good intentions can deform the black struggle: The film kills off Biko (Denzel Washington) in the first hour and leaves the screen to Woods. It was in fact white liberals like Donald Woods and Richard Attenborough who prompted Biko's move into separatist politics in the first place: In 1968, he organized the break of black students from the politically radical, nonracial National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) to form the all-black South African Students Organization (SASO). This move was, in effect, the birth of South Africa's Black Consciousness Movement, which grew throughout the 1970s and is said to have been largely responsible for the massive grass-roots uprisings of 1976.

Biko's reasoning had to do with black autonomy at the deepest level: "Even in the 'non-racial' set-up . . . the whites [are] doing all the talking and the blacks the listening," Biko wrote, drawing on his experience with NUSAS. [He was writing under the pseudonym Frank Talk in his column "I Write What I Like," printed in the SASO newsletter.] "It's rather like expecting a slave to work together with the slave-master's son to remove all the conditions leading to the former's enslavement." What Biko proposed instead was a separatism, a system of independent action and self-empowerment drawn from the ideologies of Pan-Africanism: "Black man you're on your own!" was the national slogan of his movement.

Donald Woods's initial reaction to this, shown at the beginning of the film, was typical of white liberals at the time: In an editorial in his *Daily Dispatch*, Woods labeled Biko a dangerous racist. All over South Africa white liberals behaved as if they had been betrayed—they had given themselves to the struggle, they had been branded as "traitors" by their own people, and now they were being told to fuck off by the blacks they were trying to help. If you really want to help, Biko replied, educate your own people and let us talk for ourselves. Do not presume to understand us.

And it is here that the question of how Biko might respond to Attenborough's efforts becomes a little more complex. It could be said that by making *Cry Freedom* the story of a white South African who comes to radical political consciousness through his association with Biko, rather than making it the story of Biko himself, Attenborough is practicing exactly what the prophet of black consciousness preached: Leave it to us to tell our story, and *you* tell *yours*. Looked at in this way, it is entirely appropriate for Attenborough to approach the South African conundrum through the story of Donald Woods, for he is himself a Donald Woods figure, as are most of the members of his audience: the white, middle-class moviegoers who are reasonably confident of their own moral rectitude. Such viewers watch the story of South Africa from the perspective they actually occupy in the world: that of implicated outsiders who, for the price of $6, are admitted for a few hours into the South African experience (just as, in the film, Woods is allowed into the townships) to be educated and "conscientized," to use Biko's famous word. They are not allowed to deceive themselves into thinking they can experience the consciousness of Biko or that of any other black South African.

Attenborough's focus on Woods might well be congruent with Biko's philosophy, then, but a problem arises in the manner in which he chooses to conscientize his audience. From the outset he claims he wants to make a piece of anti-apartheid propaganda, and the conclusion he chooses—rolling a list of names of all of those who have, like Biko, died in detention—is a brilliant moment of polemic. By ending with this litany of generally unknown martyrs, Attenborough suggests that he is telling just one of the million South African stories that could be told. If we examine the context in which this litany is presented, however, we can see how Attenborough has settled for something less than "conscientizing" in the end: The screen across which the names roll is a panoramic South African skyscape through which a light airplane has just flown. The plane is carrying Donald Woods, his family and his Biko biography to freedom and fame. It is the Light Airplane of Political Awakening, soaring above the bloody contours of South Africa.

I was on that plane. As a member of the audience I had been sucked into the tragedy of contemporary South Africa, I had sobbed while three hours whizzed by, and now, like Kevin Kline, I was free. I went home, had a couple of nightmares and forgot about it in the morning. I had been purged.

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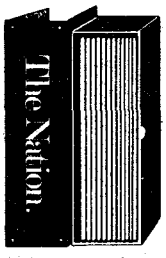

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Despite the fact that I am an expatriate South African, I doubt my response to the film was unusual: Attenborough himself attests to its "universal appeal." In *The New York Times* he explained his use of Woods's story by saying that, with its dramatic race to freedom across the Lesotho border, it had inherent dramatic quality—the kind of "adventure appeal" that he believes is necessary to hook a mass audience. "In the end," he says, "because he had such a short life there was very little dramatic that happened to Steve apart from his death." This rationalization seems absurd in the face of the story of a student leader and national hero who manages to inspire a revolution on the streets before being beaten into oblivion and forced to make a 700-mile ride to Pretoria and death.

I think Attenborough meant to say that what Woods's story has that Biko's doesn't is the appeal of a heroic escape. Unlike Biko, Donald Woods triumphed by getting away. He is not a martyr but a hero, and people generally prefer heroes. Biko is undoubtedly a hero as well, but Attenborough has access to him only as a martyr who remains earthbound in the nonwhite cemetery outside Kingwilliamstown. Woods, on the other hand, flies heroically off into the clouds of consciousness. So too does the audience.

If *Cry Freedom* shackles us to a process that cleanses our systems, then another film on the current circuit, Stephen Frears's *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, leaves us feeling as dirty and as irreconcilable as the streets of inner London itself. As such, it is Stephen Frears's and Hanif Kureishi's antidote to the cathartic splendor of Warren Beatty's *Reds*, of *Cry Freedom*, of, most recently, Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor*.

Sammy and Rosie is, as Terrence Rafferty pointed out a couple of weeks ago in *The Nation*, closer to a Brechtian parable than anything we have seen on the screen in a long time. It is replete with alienation effects—subtitles, split screens, dialogue delivered in a disconcerting monotone and so forth. We even know the plot before we go in—Sammy and Rosie get laid. As a result we are forced to put that proverbial Brechtian "critical distance" between ourselves and the events—exactly the critical distance Frears puts between his camera and the characters. The result is permanently unsettling and quite brilliant.

Attenborough allows us no such distance. Both films spin around the coming to consciousness of an authority figure: Donald Woods through his contact with Steve Biko; Shashi Kapoor's Rafi (an Indian or Pakistani ex-Cabinet minister personally responsible for torture and repression) through his contact with the racial and social conflicts of South London.

But whereas Attenborough forces us to identify with Woods, demanding that we undergo a parallel coming to consciousness, Frears keeps us apart from Rafi: as part of the world, we in the audience play a role in his education. We are on the strife-torn London streets through which he walks, rather than in his heart, and we are subsequently involved in a discourse, an exchange of ideas with him. We formulate in our minds the question Rosie articulates when she asks him if he takes responsibility for his country's crimes, and when he responds angrily and passionately he is also telling us something we need to know.

The different approaches of these two films are perhaps most obvious in the riot scenes—the spontaneous looting and pillaging of South London in *Sammy and Rosie*, and the equally spontaneous Soweto uprising of 1976 in *Cry Freedom*. Frears uses unsettling montage, bilious pans and blurry close-ups for his riot scenes, giving the impression that he understands the violence as little as we do, as little as the participants themselves do. Attenborough, on the other hand, adopts Woods's omniscient and objective liberal eye and poises his camera above a meticulously choreographed, almost airbrushed, scene. The Soweto uprising is rendered in as beautiful a manner as the Amritsar massacre was: Children join the stampede in well-organized phalanxes; the police are set like tableaux against the highveld sky; even the bullet wounds are neat little pinpricks of red. It is as grand—and as unreal—as *Gandhi*.

Shot on a grand scale, *Cry Freedom* will hopefully operate on a grand scale. The catharsis it offers, even if cheap and momentary, is powerful, involving and has the potential to reach and affect a mass audience. That *Sammy and Rosie* will probably not move beyond the art movie-house scene is really a shame, because it offers so much more than *Cry Freedom*: It critiques authorities, layering levels of "oppressor" and "oppressed" on top of each other until it is hard to distinguish between them, until the result, a chaotic inner-city collage, is truly enlightening. □

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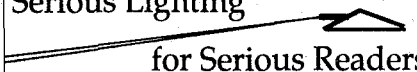

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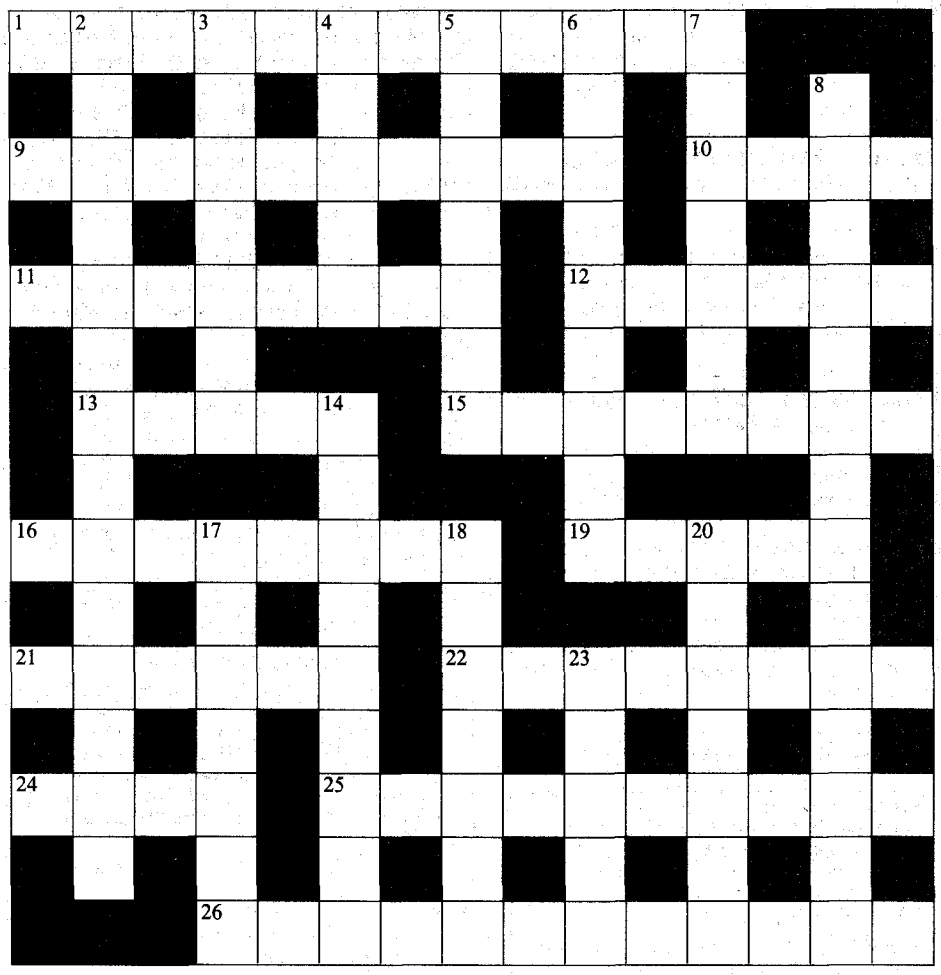
SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2178

■	A	M	E	L	I	O	R	A	T	I	O	N	■	■
C	■	A	■	I	■	U	■	U	■	N	■	A	■	T
H	A	R	V	E	S	T	■	D	E	R	V	I	S	H
A	■	C	■	S	■	O	■	I	■	U	■	R	■	E
R	O	O	S	T	■	F	O	O	T	S	T	O	O	L
M	■	N	■	I	■	D	■	■	■	H	■	B	■	A
B	R	I	L	L	I	A	N	C	E	■	V	I	E	W
R	■	■	■	L	■	T	■	L	■	A	■	■	■	I
A	R	G	O	■	B	E	L	O	W	D	E	C	K	S
C	■	A	■	C	■	■	■	G	■	A	■	O	■	A
E	N	S	C	O	N	C	E	D	■	M	O	U	R	N
L	■	T	■	M	■	O	■	A	■	S	■	L	■	A
E	A	R	L	I	E	R	■	N	A	R	R	O	W	S
T	■	I	■	T	■	G	■	C	■	I	■	M	■	S
■	■	C	R	Y	L	I	K	E	A	B	A	B	Y	■

Crossword Puzzle No. 2179

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and 23 down Just enough for an ordinary ruler, as far as the burial spot is concerned? (Well? No!) (3,4,2,3,5)
9 It makes a relict talk of what was once considered fashionable on top. (6,4)
10 That's what's in store for one who speaks the same way. (4)
11 The main arm in the Arctic. (A couple of words from the wise a different way.) (5,3)
12 Tended to be this way? (6)
13 The first part of 9 if taking tea, as one hears, and remains to be seen. (5)
15 So wordy a clue, possibly, but there are means to get in. (8)
16 The eggs must be for a soufflé, but we wouldn't want to be on the street. (6,2)
19 See 2 down.
21 An explorer does, to rediscover it. (2,4)
22 What sounds like 24 could be, but there's something catchy in sleight of hand. (8)
24 It might show an expression of opinion—to clip the head, possibly. (4)
25 Constructed to show what happens at noon, having atoned for something. (4,6)
26 A nude pervert is awful, of course, as one might see by chance. (12)

DOWN

2 and 19 across If so, it must be elsewhere, two points being excluded. (7,4,3,5)
3 Not exactly flat, nor is it viewed head on. (7)
4 Is the sea so rough as to necessitate welcome spots for the traveler? (5)
5 Unfortunately, wrath is all over the country—or at least part of it. (7)
6 One might be doing it to a date—deleting. (6,3)
7 Look at the projecting top of the steep place! (You might give one a lift, if you're concerned!) (7)
8 Set the buzzer on the clock to give you one. (6,8)
14 One follows the customs of a jailbird earlier mentioned. (9)
17 Sounds like an old writer might have to sing at work shortly—such a woman being not quite respectable. (7)
18 With perfumed unguent created in the seed container. (7)
20 One might thrive in one's own gold, for example. (7)
23 See 1 across

PUZZLED?

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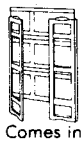
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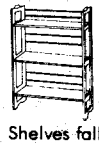
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